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Karen and Florence (2000-2006)

Turkeys: Who are They?

By Karen Davis, PhD

This article appears in the November 2006 issue of *Satya* magazine (www.satyamag.com).

My first encounter with turkeys took place at Farm Sanctuary where I worked as a volunteer one summer. There was a flock of about twenty white turkey hens and two bronze turkeys named Milton and Doris. One thing that impressed me then,

and has stayed in my mind ever since, was how the turkeys voices, their yelps, floated about the place in an infinitely plaintive refrain. Another was how one or more of the female turkeys would suddenly sit down beside me in the midst of my work, with her wings stiff and her head held high, awaiting my attention.

Doris wandered about the farmyard all day by herself like an eternal embodiment of a lost call, the call of a lost young turkey for her mother. Milton would fol-



Photo by Lois Lifshutz

raised for food, one should begin by knowing that in nature, young turkeys stay close to their mothers for four or five months after hatching. Turkeys raised for food, however, never see their mothers. Biologist William M. Healy has described the importance of bonding between young turkeys and their mothers for normal social development. He notes that much of what biologists know about wild turkey intelligence is based on work with domestic turkeys. He defends turkeys from the charge of stupidity by observing that genetic manipulation of turkeys for such gross breast development that few adult males can even walk, let alone breed creates demeaning stereotypes.

Poultry specialist Dr. Ian Duncan of the University of Guelph, Ontario, states unequivocally that turkeys possess marked intelligence [as] revealed by such behav-

low us around on his gouty legs and swollen feet. His dark eyes watched us from inside a bristling armor of iridescent brown feathers and pendant, heavily wrinkled pouches of folded head and facial skin of varying colors reflecting emotions that made me think of a body with its soul imprisoned deep inside.

Milton plodded behind people, stopping when they stopped, resuming his ponderous tread as they did. He would often stand before you, or appear unexpectedly at your back manifesting himself almost scarily at times decked out in his full array, his tail in a fabulous wheel, his wing ends dragging stiffly. Like the hens in their starched white wing skirts, crouched exactly where you were shoveling the muck, he awaited your response.

To understand the complex suffering of turkeys



Photo by Lois Lifshutz

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ioral indices as their complex social relationships, and their many different methods of communicating with each other, both visual and vocal. Likewise, Oregon State University poultry science professor, Dr. Tom Savage, says of the turkey disrespect displayed in the popular media: They have no idea what they are talking about.

I know from experience that turkeys who have lived their entire lives in industry settings can roam the woods and find their way back to the yard as soon as they get to our sanctuary. Despite the terrible things that have been done to their bodies—the gruesome genetics and mutilation of their toes and beaks at the hatchery—factory farm turkeys are alert to their surroundings and one another. Several times I remember seeing our peacemaking turkey Mila stop her testy companion Priscilla from charging a person in an angry mood by inserting herself between Priscilla and her target. And I have seen how well turkeys get along with people and with other birds at our sanctuary. Though for reasons I never figured out, our turkey Florence, who died last March after living with us for seven happy years, would occasionally get mad at one of the ducks, snood her nose down at him, and chase him off.

While researching my book *More Than a Meal: The*

...turkeys who have lived their entire lives in industry settings can roam the woods and find their way back...

Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality, I learned other things about turkeys. For instance, they transplant sound from one bird to another within the flock at a moment's danger. They also dance. In *Illumination in the Flatwoods: A Season with the Wild Turkey*, naturalist Joe Hutto describes how one morning in August, his three-month-old turkeys, upon seeing him, dropped from their roosting limbs where they had sat softly chattering in the dawn, 'stretched their wings and did their strange little dance, a joyful, happy dance, expressing an exuberance.

And a witness who chanced upon an evening dance of adult birds wrote:

I heard a flock of wild turkeys calling. They were not calling strayed members of the flock. They were just having a twilight frolic before going to roost. They kept dashing at one another in mock anger, stridently calling all the while, almost playing leapfrog in their antics. Their notes were bold and clear. For about five minutes they played on the brown pine-straw floor of the forest, then as if at a signal, they assumed a sudden stealth and stole off in the glimmering shadows.

An emotional behavior described in turkeys is the great wake—they will hold over a fallen companion. In

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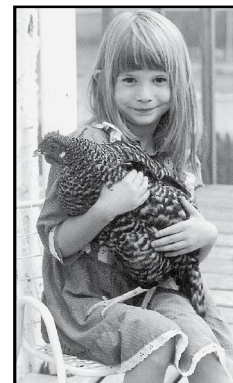
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The Wild Turkey: Its History and Domestication, A.W. Schorger cites an episode in which the wing beats of a turkey hen who had been shot brought a flock that stopped beside the dying bird. Similar behavior has been observed in turkeys on factory farms when a bird goes into a convulsive heart attack. It is not uncommon to go into a bird house and see the afflicted bird lying dead, surrounded by three or four other birds that died because of the hysteria caused, wrote a poultry researcher. Such hysteria reveals a sensibility in turkeys that should awaken us to how badly we treat them and make us stop.

Turkeys have a mysterious empathy with one another under duress, and they can be fierce fighters as well. A turkey mother will fight vigorously to protect her young, as described by an observer of the following drama in rural Virginia:

I saw a turkey coming into the back field. She had about 10 babies the size of large quail walking with her. Without warning, the hen took off vertically as if she had stepped on a mine. About 20 feet off the ground, she intercepted and attacked a hawk that was coming in for a baby. The hen hit the hawk with her feet first and with her back almost parallel to the ground. The hawk flew toward the back of the field with the hen in pursuit; it turned back towards the babies, and the hen hit it again. They both fell about 10 feet and were fighting with their feet, until the hawk headed for the tree line and kept

going. The hen returned to her babies. When they went back into the pines, the babies were very close to their mother's feet. Wish you could have seen it.

Thanks to this eyewitness, we did see it, and let us remember that turkeys need our help and they deserve our respect. Give all the thanks you want but, I hear them saying, please don't gobble me.

What Can I Do?

Between April and July, 2006, PETA investigators documented horrific cruelty to turkeys at the Butterball slaughter plant in Ozark, Arkansas. Butterball turkeys are hung upside down, shocked in painful electrified water that paralyzes *and does Not stun them*. Their necks are then partially slit and, dead or alive, they are thrown into scalding water. Adding to their misery, workers were taped stomping on live turkeys, slamming them against walls, exploding their skulls and popping out their spines with sadistic glee. This is the culture of slaughter. Please don't support it. Order our vegan cookbook *Instead of Chicken, Instead of Turkey: A Poultryless Poultry Potpourri* for delicious, easy recipes, and *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality* for the cultural, literary, and natural history of turkeys. These books make great holiday and library gifts. 🐔

STOCK CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Friends,

Several of our members have made financial contributions in the form of stock to United Poultry Concerns through our securities account. We are deeply grateful for these gifts, and anticipate more in the future. There are two obvious benefits in making stock contributions. Please consider these advantages in making your future gifts to United Poultry Concerns.

Donors may give as much stock as they want to a nonprofit organization without impinging upon their estate. By giving this way, they avoid paying a capital gains tax on their assets, because they are gifting their assets.

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United Poultry Concerns has a securities account with **UBS Financial**. For information on how you can donate to us this way, please call our financial advisor, **Claudia Puopolo**, at UBS at **757-490-5639** or **800-368-4070**.

From United Poultry Concerns and all our Feathered Friends, we thank you for helping to ensure our future!

Sincerely,
Karen Davis, Ph.D.
President



You are cordially invited to attend United Poultry Concerns' 7th Annual Conference
on the topic of Inadmissible Comparisons
Co-hosted by the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund and Lantern Books at the NYU Law School in New
York City, March 24-25, 2007

Inadmissible Comparisons asks: Can the Holocaust be compared with African American slavery or the Native American genocide? Can any of these experiences be related to those of animals on today's factory farms? Recently, a number of writers and thinkers have sought to draw parallels between the suffering of one group of individuals and another, and incurred the wrath of those who consider their experience unique. This conference explores why such comparisons are offered and asks whether they should or should not be made. It examines the rhetoric and images of those comparisons and the agendas that might lie behind them, while interrogating the need for comparative thinking in the first place.

The conference will be held in D'Agostino Hall-Lipton Hall on campus.
Registration: \$75. Students/Seniors: \$60. NYU students/faculty: free

To register, send check or money order to UPC, PO Box 150, Machipongo, VA 23405. Or register by credit card at www.upc-online.org

Maximum attendance capacity: 174. Register by March 15. \$100 after March 15.

Confirmed speakers:

Karen Davis, President of United Poultry Concerns, author of *The Holocaust and the Henmaid's Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities* and *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Lantern Books)

Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *The Pornography of Meat* (Continuum) and editor with Josephine Donovan of *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics: A Reader* (forthcoming March 2007 Columbia University Press)

Roberta Kalechofsky, Fiction writer, publisher, and animal rights activist, founder of Jews for Animal Rights, author of *Animal Suffering and The Holocaust: The Problem With Comparisons* (Micah Publications)

Patrice Jones, Coordinator of the Eastern Shore Chicken Sanctuary and the Global Hunger Alliance, author of *Aftershock: Confronting Trauma in a Violent World: A Guide for Activists and their Allies* (Lantern Books)

Charles Patterson, author of *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (Lantern Books)

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Chelsea Inn. 46 W. 17th St. www.chelseainn.com. (800) 640-6469

Holiday Inn Manhattan Downtown/Soho. 138 Lafayette St. www.holidayinn.com. (800) 972-3160

Howard Johnson Express Inn NYC. 135 E. Houston St. www.hojo.com. (212) 358-8844

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United Poultry Concerns a “Lonely Counterpoint” to the Chicken Industry

The September 2006 issue of the *Washingtonian* has a 12-page article on the Delmarva chicken industry on the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. In 42-Day Wonders, journalist Tom Horton describes how chickens are raised for slaughter in 42 days. The article features Lou Ann Rieley, a mother of twelve who's been raising chickens for Perdue. Her children learned to count by collecting dead chickens. The article includes photos and can be read online at www.upc-online.org/broiler/9230842day.html

United Poultry Concerns is described as follows:

There's a lonely counterpoint to the efficiency of America's poultry prowess located near Machipongo, Virginia, just down the road from two of Delmarva's biggest processing plants. In a small, sunny barnyard ringed with chicken coops, Karen Davis camps in the heart of enemy territory. Here for the last decade she has run her sanctuary for escapees and discards from the poultry meat and egg industries — and borne witness on behalf of the chicken. She is founder and president of United Poultry Concerns, an animal rights group with 11,000 members. Last May UPC organized International Respect for Chickens Day to celebrate the dignity, beauty, and life of chickens and to protest the bleakness of their lives in farming operations.

Of the modern chicken's life, she says, It doesn't get any worse: raised in a dark, stinking world, no mothers, no sunshine, total terror of catching, killing . . . this is what we've done to a wild jungle fowl.

A PhD in English, she has written several books:

Prisoned Chickens, Poisoned Eggs and *The Holocaust and the Henmaids Tale: A Case for Comparing Atrocities*.

Karen Davis is as wedded to her flock as Lou Ann Rieley is to hers. The number of birds here has numbered as high as 123, but right now it's about 85 every one an individual. There's Bonnie Brown and

Rebecca, former caged egg layers, and Hamilton, a bantam-cochin mix with fancy feathered feet.

Then there is Victor, a huge broiler rooster found and abandoned in a parking lot. Victor is Elvis in old age, though he's not that old. His skeleton can't support his bulk, and he quivers with the effort of just standing to eat. It's okay, it's okay, Davis murmurs as she props him up. Birds like this get old awful fast; they were never bred for the long run, she says. Should she euthanize him? I can't, as long as they can enjoy the food, the breeze, and the sun — and they have each other, she says, referring to Eloise and Amanda, two crippled broiler hens who seldom leave Victor's side.

It is remarkable, Davis says, how quickly the birds revert to nature despite being bred for generations to maximize egg or meat

production: They take dust baths, perch in trees, or try to, bathe in the sun, eat green grass, and socialize. Anyone who argues they are adapted to captivity in the modern broiler house should come here and watch how joyfully they rush outside each morning. She often cites the work of Australian avian researcher Lesley Rogers, who has devised experiments to test for intelligence in chickens and has written, I am convinced chickens are not animals that should be kept in mentally and socially deprived conditions. They are as complex as the cats and dogs we share our homes with and should not be looked upon as bird brains. 🐔



Photo by David Harp

Freddaflower Memorial & Appreciation Fund



UPC sanctuary assistant Carol Baker and Moses

The pain of losing them is the price we pay for the privilege of knowing them and sharing their lives. . . .
 Vicky Barbee

We thank those people who have contributed to our work with recent donations *In Loving Memory and in Honor and Appreciation* of the following beloved family members and friends:

In memory of a very loving hen named Tofutti Cutie, my adopted chicken from Farm Sanctuary. This beautiful bird passed away this spring after living at the sanctuary for five

and a half years. She was rescued from a wire cage in an Ohio egg production facility after a tornado hit, and I was proud to be her sponsor. – *Ruth Michel*

In memory of all the birds who have died and continue to die who have not been able to accomplish their wishes and dreams. – *Russell Landau*

In memory of three wonderful, sweet chickens who are now in chicken heaven. – *Hilde Wilson*

To My Beloved Three – Time has not healed my sorrow but has made me cherish you more. I miss those days so much. – *Nomi Dayan*

In honor of St. Martin De Porres. – *Brien J. Comerford*

In honor of Leonard, Nathaniel, Julie, and Fredericka. – *Paul Deane*

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A Story of Eight Chickens

By Mary Haller

During the summer I discovered that a little market where I shopped in Pennsylvania had a group of eight chickens stuck out back in a filthy 7X7-foot pen. There was a big red rooster and seven pretty hens, all

different colors. The owner didn't want them—a relative had left them there—so disclaiming responsibility, she threw carrot peels to the chickens, saying, "They'll eat anything if they're hungry enough."

With that, I started visiting the chickens every day. Their droppings had piled and hardened, and the place was a mess where the rain dripped in, so I scraped and dug and mucked as best I could while the chickens watched the amazing spectacle of someone caring for them

finally! Oh, and I brought them leafy green lettuce, grapes, fresh grains, seeds and water after talking to Karen Davis at United Poultry Concerns about what to feed them. When they saw me coming they'd run to the gate to greet me, and especially did they love corn on the cob, eating it eagerly out of my hand. Karen, meanwhile, arranged for a driver to pick them up and take them to UPC's sanctuary in Virginia.

But first let me tell you that the Rhode Island Red rooster was quite handsome—which he seemed to realize when I brought him a mirror one day. Standing in front of that mirror in the mud, he preened himself and carefully checked his feathers. And he watched his seven



hens to make sure no harm came to them. If I picked up a hen and she squawked too loud, he'd rush over and peck at my ankles! And when it started to get dark, he'd lead everyone up to where they all slept together, everyone softly clucking and peeping as it got darker.

Early in the morning on September 3, John Huber came from Lancaster, PA to pick up the chickens and take them to United Poultry Concerns. He was very gentle with them, and I could tell that even though they were a bit scared at being picked up and placed in the cages in the van, they knew something good was happening to them.

I miss these little creatures and would have kept them if I could. Caring for them, I remembered what fun it was to have chickens around. I would talk to these chickens while I fed them, and they would cock their little heads and look up at me, as if they were really listening to what I had to say. *Mary Haller*



UPC Postscript: Mary's chickens are doing great! They have a big L-shaped porch all to themselves and their own fenced yard down the back steps. Their names are Troubadour, Eleanor, Isobel, Rosemary, Mandy,

Maisie, Taffy, and Paisley. We thank Mary Haller and John Huber for safeguarding these chickens who will live happily for the rest of their lives at United Poultry Concerns. 🐔

A Wing and a Prayer: The Kapparot Chicken-Killing Ritual

In October, United Poultry Concerns adopted and helped find homes for some of the 900 young chickens who were left in cages in a garage in Brooklyn, New York. Seized by the ASPCA from the garage, where practitioners of the brutal chicken swinging ritual known as Kapparot or Kaporos (atonements) abandoned them, this group of chickens did not end up being swung and slaughtered to transfer divine punishment to the soul of a chicken, as happened to thousands of other chickens at the end of September and as happens every year for six days before Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement on October 2 in sections of Los Angeles, New York City, Israel and other parts of the world where ultra-orthodox Hasidic (Chasidic) communities reside. The ritual was over for this year, and these birds were just leftover trash until a neighbor heard their voices and called the authorities.

Animal rights protesters and rabbis have both pointed out that Kapparot is not sanctioned or required in the Torah or the Talmud. It's a medieval custom, not a Jewish law. In "Rabbis cry fowl on ritual use of chickens," Israeli journalists Neta Sela and Roi Mandel wrote an article for the Internet publication ynet.com (9.28.06) from which the following excerpt is taken:

It does not make sense that we are asking to purify ourselves on Yom Kippur through the slaughter of a helpless animal. Chedva Vanderbrook, Jerusalem Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, ynetnews.com, September 28, 2006

Sunday morning, a few hours before the Yom Kippur fast, many Jews will perform the Kapparot ritual and will wave a soon-to-be slaughtered chicken around their heads. This ancient Jewish custom, which is meant

to transfer divine punishment to the soul of a chicken . . . [has recently] encountered opposition by animal welfare groups and even some rabbis.

First a few words about the practice and its purpose. According to tradition, the father of the house takes a rooster and the wife takes a female chicken. Each of them holds the animal in his or her right hand and recites a number of verses. Afterwards the chicken is transferred to the left hand and is waved around

the head three times while the person recites: This is my exchange, this is my substitute, this is my atonement. The rooster [or hen] will go to its death while I enter and proceed to a good long life, and to peace. The chicken, which is immediately slaughtered, symbolizes man's sins and dies instead of him.

Over the years, many Jews have adopted a substitute for the chicken—a piece of pottery that is then smashed or money that goes to charity. However there are still many that do not have mercy on the chickens. Rabbi Gilad Kariv, from the Reform Movement, claims that this custom bespeaks a lack of compassion and

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Photo by Tal Ronnen



Photo by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times

mercy, attributes that generally characterize the Jewish people.

Slaughtering chickens is an unfit custom that goes against Jewish feelings regarding animals, he explains. Judaism has always emphasized that the concepts of atonement, soul searching and repentance are dependant on an inner spiritual endeavor that man undertakes to correct his ways. The concept of Kapparot shifts the emphasis to external ritualistic expressions.

Kariv contends that the ritual slaughter of the chickens, and the hardships they encounter on the way, cause unjustified suffering. Anyone who walks through the markets can see that the manner in which the chickens are held before the Kapparot is insufferable. There is no veterinary supervision and no concern for the feelings of these poor creatures. . . .

It does not make sense that we are asking to purify ourselves on Yom Kippur through the slaughter of a helpless animal, says Chedva Vanderbrook, a board member of the Jerusalem Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. . . .

Vanderbrook agrees with Rabbi Kariv that it is not just the slaughter that is unacceptable, but also the manner in which the birds are treated. Next to my house in Jerusalem there are chicken cages scattered around without water, she tells. The chickens are brought to

the slaughter in cramped cages without water in the broiling sun. Half of them die on the way. No one thinks that these poor creatures deserve to live on the way to their death.

Unfortunately I think that it will be very hard to eradicate this custom in the Ultra-Orthodox community, Vanderbrook pessimistically summarizes. But I am appealing to traditional people who customarily perform Kapparot and am asking them to stop. Greater rabbis than myself have requested to end this practice. Rabbi Yosef Karo, for example, wrote that this custom should be abolished. The Ramban expressed similar ideas and Rabbi Kaduri who was a vegetarian said that it could be given up. Rabbi Aviner said

that it is preferable to use money for Kapparot and that the slaughter is not kosher due to the treatment of the chickens. (The article with photos is available online at www.upc-online.org/kaparos/.)

Kapparot, in Los Angeles

I drove to the Bais Yaakov High School last night to witness again the Kapparot ritual. A large crowd had gathered, including many children, in the backyard of the school. A truck with cages filled with chickens was parked in the back lot. Individuals were holding live chickens upside down, waving them over the heads of others. I observed frightened chickens with half of their feathers gone running loose. Children screamed as the adults ran after the chickens. Bill Dyer to UPC, Sept. 13, 2002

Today between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., please join fellow activists to Name & Shame the organizers and participants in the bloody chicken sacrifice known as Kapparot. For 6 days until Oct. 1, morning to night, in front of adults, children and babies, these pitiful birds are first swung around the practitioner's head. Then the vocal chords are slit so the chicken cannot scream in pain, and then, still alive, the writhing birds are thrown into a plastic trash bag


while still walking and looking for a way out with the head clinging to a cut throat. To view this torture on video taken in 2005, go to: <http://www.unevil.com/temp/RitualKill/>. It takes about 10 minutes to download. Action Alert from LA Activists Nazila Mah and Colin Walkeen, Sept. 27, 2006

Kapparot, in Brooklyn


I am a member of the religious Jewish community here in Brooklyn, New York. This year I took several pictures of the deplorable conditions in which the birds were kept. I believe they receive no food or water for the week or so that they are in the possession of the retailers. They certainly receive no food or water over the Shabbat. One Kapparot station had the birds outside exposed to the rain on a Shabbat through Sunday. I personally saw birds dead in their crates. Birds were crushed. Birds were opening and closing their mouths, probably out of thirst. The retailer who sold me my birds I took them directly to Angel's Gate shelter on Long Island tossed them into my box as if they were loaves of bread. The fact that most retailers didn't even question me when I took pictures means that no one has made life difficult for them. Its time to make life difficult for people claiming to be religious and doing this to animals. David Rosenfeld to UPC, Oct. 10, 2006

What Can I Do?

In all correspondence, please be professional and polite.



 Urge the ASPCA to force the Hasidic rabbis in New York to comply with New York State Anti-Cruelty Law, Article 26, which states that animals must have fresh food, water and protection from the elements at all times and are not allowed to sit miserably in crates for a week or more without sustenance or shelter awaiting their cruel death. Politely urge the ASPCA to enforce the law and request a response:

Edwin Sayres, President
ASPCA
424 East 92 Street
New York, NY 10128
Phone: 212-876-7700, ext. 4603

 In Los Angeles, ritual animal sacrifice is illegal under Municipal Code SEC.53.67: No person shall engage in, participate in, assist in, or perform animal sacrifice. No person shall own, keep, possess or have custody of any animal with the purpose or intention of using such animal for animal sacrifice. No person shall knowingly sell, offer to sell, give away or transfer any animal to another person who intends to use such animal for animal sacrifice. Animal sacrifice means the injuring or killing of any animal in any religious or cult ritual or as an offering to a deity, devil, demon or spirit, wherein the animal has not been injured or killed primarily for food purposes, regardless of whether all or any part of such animal is subsequently consumed.

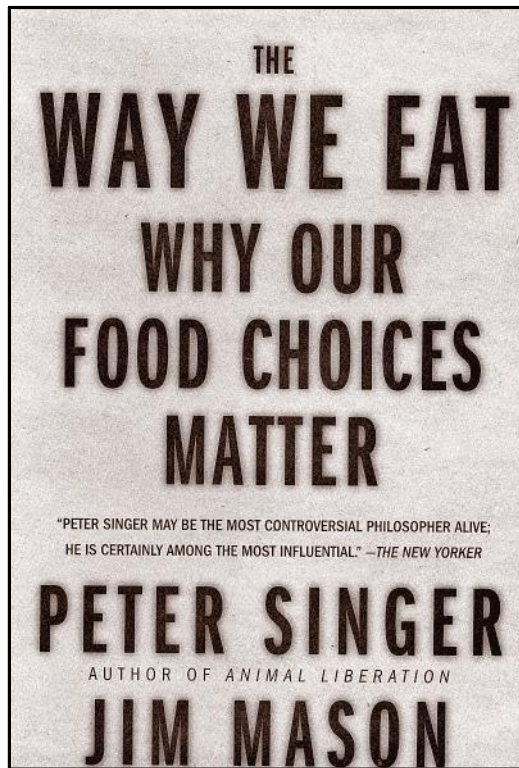
General Manager of LA Animal Services, Ed Boks, was quoted in a PRWEB press release, Sept. 28, 2006: Nowhere is the practice of Kapparot ever mentioned in the Torah. It is a pagan tradition that has been muddled into the religious practices of a small Jewish sect. Kapparot should have no place in the 21st century Los Angeles community. Mr. Box is working with rabbis and government officials to stop Kapparot. Every concerned citizen is encouraged to contact Mr. Boks to express their support for ending Kapparot in Los Angeles. Rabbis and other members of the Jewish community, especially, are urged to send letter of support. Contact:

Ed Boks, General Manager
LA Animal Services
221 Figueroa Ave. Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: 310-210-1683

 Please write letters to local Jewish newspapers opposing Kapparot as a cruel custom that is not a Jewish law. United Poultry Concerns is preparing a 'Wing & a Prayer' brochure for handout and will let you know as soon as it becomes available. For more information on Kapparot and a list of rabbis to contact, visit: www.upc-online.org/kaparos/. In addition, please visit: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/kapparot.html 

Book Review

The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter



By Peter Singer & Jim Mason

Rodale, 2006

Review by Karen Davis, PhD, President of United Poultry Concerns

In 1980, attorney Jim Mason and philosopher Peter Singer coauthored *Animal Factories*. Updated in 1990, the book documents the destructive effects of factory farming on the family farm, the environment, human health and the lives of animals raised for food. In *The Way We Eat*, Mason and Singer team up to show how we can, and why we should, act to reduce the harm that our food choices inflict on animals, the environment, and other people.

The book is presented as the authors' journey into the homes of three American families whose food choice habits and dietary ethics range from standard convenient (Tyson, Wal-Mart, fast-food) to semi-conscientious (humanely-produced meat, dairy and eggs) to

ethical vegan (healthful, compassionate, animal-free food). They chat with pig farmers, egg producers, commercial crabbers, and others in the food industry to give readers a better idea of the origin and true cost of foods in terms of dollars and cents, animal suffering, environmental damage and human health.

They show us a free-range pig farm versus an industrialized pig farm, and visit organic and cage-free hen operations where the hens may or may not (not if the eggs are labeled cage-free) spend some time outdoors, and where they are beak trimmed to offset the effects of boredom and crowding and are ultimately trucked to slaughter, live markets or elsewhere after a year or two. The authors explain that it is not possible to produce laying hens without also producing male chickens, and since these male chicks have no commercial value, they are invariably killed as soon as they have been sexed. The laying hens themselves will be killed once their rate of laying declines. In the dairy industry much the same thing happens—the male calves are killed immediately or raised for veal, and the cows are turned into hamburger long before normal old age. So rejecting the killing of animals points to a vegan, rather than a vegetarian, diet (p. 279).

Scientific evidence that fish feel pain is importantly presented, and in *Enter the Chicken Shed*, the authors powerfully describe the brutality of the broiler chicken industry (which produces the 6-week-old baby chickens consumers know only as chicken) and the unspeakable pain and suffering these birds endure from birth to death. In addition to increased mortality due to heart attacks, lameness and other manmade miseries, chickens are intentionally kept alive during the slaughter process so their hearts will continue to beat and pump out blood after their throats are cut, which is why hundreds of millions of chickens—one in every three, according to former Tyson chicken slaughterhouse worker Virgil Butler—are scalded alive at the slaughter plant. Professor John Webster of the University of Bristol's School of Veterinary Medicine is quoted as saying that industrialized chicken production is in both magnitude and severity, the single most severe, system-

A strong spirit is the most powerful tool an animal activist can have, and integrity is the rock on which the animal movement must stand. The spirit was saddened and the rock was wobbling, however, when I read several reviews of Peter Singer's new book co-authored with Jim Mason, *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*.

Yes, Peter Singer is an articulate writer and known globally as the father of the animal movement, and without a doubt this book will open some eyes and close mouths to certain types of food. However, Singer is letting many animals down and turning a blind eye to their brutal slaughter, rubber-stamping their death by cautiously trying to keep the status quo happy.

It's much easier for Singer and more palatable for the public that he advise them on what meat is the most *humane* to eat, whether one should eat farmed fish or those wild-caught, or casually describe how to be a conscientious carnivore. Just make sure the animals you eat aren't factory farmed but are instead *humanely* raised.

Singer's recent media interviews seem to place abolitionists in the box marked fanatic. I don't believe people who oppose abattoirs and the institutionalized and systematic killing of others are fanatics. Sadly, it's become clear that Singer is Uncle Peter rather than father to the animals. During his interviews promoting his new book, Singer failed to take the excellent opportunity to promote in any way a vegan lifestyle as the true, ethical choice for less suffering, terror and destruction in the world. As Gary Francione, Professor of Law at Rutgers, clearly and simply states:

Veganism is the one truly abolitionist goal that we can all achieve and we can achieve it immediately, starting with our next meal.

This is an alarm bell appealing to compassionate people and animal activists everywhere to step back and look at the bigger picture. If we substitute humans for animals in Singer's reasoning, the inherent speciesism of his viewpoint becomes clear. Would we



Patty Mark Addresses UPC Conference

argue that fewer beatings and a longer chain would make slavery acceptable or ethical? Not any more than we should contemplate kindly cutting the throat of an innocent animal to feed our face.

While Singer would argue that his moderate approach provides a stepping stone for the average consumer who is frightened by the word vegan, it merely serves to perpetuate the false belief that animals are our property to use as we like. It's our job to lead the way to abolition.

From Myth: Killing Can Be Kind, by Patty Mark in the August 2006 issue of *Satya* magazine (www.satyamag.com). Patty is president of the Australian animal advocacy organization Animal Liberation Victoria (www.alv.org.au) and pioneer of the global Open Rescue movement, which she brought to the US on June 26-27, 1999, when she spoke at United Poultry Concerns' historic Forum on Direct Action for Animals in Machipongo, Virginia. For more information about this revolutionary Forum and Patty's presentation, read *Open Rescues: Putting a Face on the Rescuers and on the Rescued* by Karen Davis, in *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals*, ed. by Steven Best, PhD & Anthony J. Nocella II & published by Lantern Books (800-856-8664. www.lanternbooks.com). 🐔

atic example of mans inhumanity to another sentient animal (p. 24).

A Long Way from Animal Liberation

When the book was in draft I was asked to read and offer suggestions on the chicken and egg chapters, which I gladly did with improved results, for while *The Way We Eat* conveys much of the cruelty of industrialized chicken and egg production, the authors empathize poorly with birds and do things like crudely referring to artificially-inseminated turkeys genitals as their assholes, * and demeaning hens need to dustbathe by implying that dustbathing is some sort of poorly understood female type of behavior, when in fact dustbathing is well known by scientists and others, including the authors (I gave them the information, which they ignored), to be chickens way of maintaining healthy skin and plumage. So essential is dustbathing to their wellbeing that battery hens try to dustbathe on the wire floor of their cages.

In an interview with the online publication *Slate*, Singer revealingly said that he thinks the circle of compassionate treatment of nonhuman animals gets gray when you get beyond mammals, and while criticizing treating nonhuman animals as things [its], he himself refers to chickens throughout as its and suggests that engineering wingless chickens to fit more of them into tight spaces would probably be an improvement. (Picture the experimental research being done to accomplish this goal as well as the engineering of insentient brainless chickens which Singer also considers an ethical improvement on the present system.)

Moreover, despite the overwhelming evidence that pre-slaughter electrical stunning of turkeys, chickens and other birds tortures them horribly, and though a major campaign by farmed-animal advocates and welfare scientists is underway to get rid of electrical stunning because of its excruciating cruelty, Singer blandly told *Slate* that spent hens can be killed humanely, if you make sure that every hen is individually stunned with an electric shock and then killed by having its [sic] throat cut (*Slate*, May 8, 2006).

The Way We Eat contains valuable information, ideas, and recommendations; however, the authors char-

acterization of less industrialized, more traditional types of animal farms and farming practices as humane and animal friendly does not hold up. One can only wonder if their skuzzy applause would be given if instead of chickens, cows, pigs, turkeys and fish, the animals were companion animals or humans.

The book is thus a long way from the animal liberation and antispeciesist philosophy associated with Peter Singer, and from Jim Masons earlier book *An Unnatural Order* which criticizes traditional animal farming as the root of social injustice and human domination in the world. Still, the authors make important points. They argue for example that 'Personal purity isnt really the issue. Not supporting animal abuse and persuading others not to support it is. Giving people the impression that it is virtually impossible to be vegan doesnt help animals at all (p. 283).

And for those who ethically reject meat from large-scale industrial operations but are not vegetarians, a big problem the authors point out is that When conscientious omnivores eat meat, their dietary choices are less evident. On the plate, ham from a pig who led a happy life looks very much like ham from a factory-farmed pig. Thus the eating habits of the conscientious omnivore are likely to reinforce the common view that animals are things for us to use and unlikely to influence others to reconsider what they eat (pp. 258-58).

The Way We Eat concludes with an annotated selection of resources for more information about the issues raised in the book. Strongly recommended under Animal Agriculture are my books *Prisoned Chickens*, *Poisoned Eggs: An Inside Look at the Modern Poultry Industry* and *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*. These books available from UPC.

*The books section, A Day in the Life of a Turkey Inseminator, pp. 28-29, first appeared as the cover article, In the Turkey Breeding Factory by Frank Observer (Jim Mason), in the Fall-Winter issue of *Poultry Press*, Vol. 4, No. 4. Its reprinted in my book *More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality*, pp. 84-85. The desensitizing language was not in the original. 🐔

Singer revealingly said that he thinks the circle of compassionate treatment of nonhuman animals gets gray when you get beyond mammals, ...

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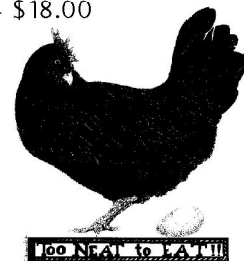
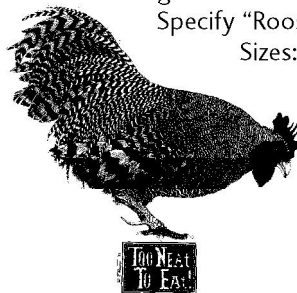
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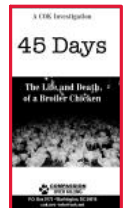
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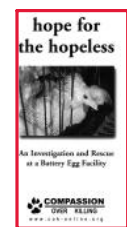
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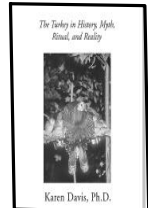
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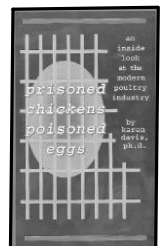
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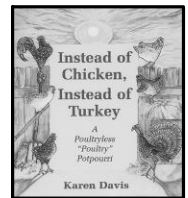
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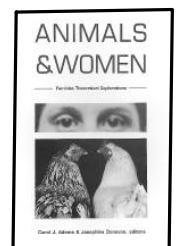
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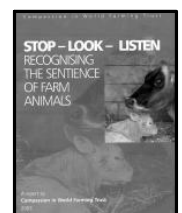
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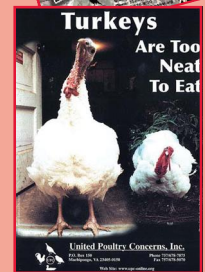
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