

# Jewish Vegan Voices

Here are four statements by real-life Jewish vegans who answered our 2021-2022 questionnaire. We did not receive any photos to include with these.

*The views expressed here are those of the individuals themselves and are intended as stimuli for deep thinking, discussion and debate in RE lessons.*

## **Elaine, 57 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 1-2 years**

### **Elaine is Jewish and says she is 'spiritual but not religious'**

Unneeded animal suffering is why I am vegan. I was vegetarian for 30 years before becoming vegan 2 years ago.

Now also motivated by concern for the environment and for personal health.

Mainly because of wanting no animal to suffer just so I can have something like bacon. Also, my health has deteriorated and now I eat much healthier vegan food than I did when first becoming vegan. I am more aware now, of the great health benefits by eating a healthy Whole Foods vegan diet. Also, equally important, we need to clean up the environment we call Earth and eating plant-based helps do this too.

Veganism means no harm to any animal. Eating no animal products, wearing no animal products (leather, wool, etc), and trying to find shampoos/makeup that is vegan. It means using no animal products. I believe in this; however, I still have wool sweaters that I am trying to rid myself of by buying cotton and manmade materials for clothing. Also, my next coat will be without down as I know this is not vegan. I am trying to get rid of everything that has animal products that I have purchased before going vegan. I eat no animal products and am trying hard to rid myself of everything else I have that contains animal products. I also donate monthly to sanctuaries. Also, I ask my father to give to animal sanctuaries instead of giving me a present on my birthday.

The best thing about being vegan is not contributing to the horrible suffering of billions of animals.

The most challenging thing is people who are not vegan blindly ignoring the animal suffering and thinking veganism is strange/unhealthy/and generally thinking it is weird and extreme.

## **Elinor, 16 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 3- years**

### **Elinor is Jewish and says she is 'religious'**

I am vegan to reduce animal suffering, help the environment and for my personal health.

Veganism is my stance against animal cruelty and my belief that all beings are equal. It means not intentionally supporting any kind of animal abuse, whether for food, experiments, entertainment or anything else, and speaking up for animals wherever I can.

**The best thing about being vegan is that you don't intentionally cause animals to suffer.**

The most challenging thing is that the rest of the world hasn't caught up yet.

## **Sara, 31 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 10+ years**

### **Sara is Jewish and describes herself as 'religious'**

I became vegetarian as a child (9yo) because it was the first time I really understood that

- 1) if I ate meat, it meant an animal had died and
- 2) I could have a choice in how and what I ate.

I became vegan 5 years later, at 14, when my parents considered me old enough to make my own food.

I'm still primarily motivated by animal concerns, followed closely by environmental and food justice/workers' rights issues. These are concerns that my faith tradition (Judaism) also takes very seriously.

I consider veganism to be a spiritual practice, a way of aligning my choices with my fundamental belief that all life is sacred.

I don't eat any animal products (incl. honey). I don't wear any animal products (incl. makeup, beauty products). I work for an animal rights org now, but I was vegan for a long time before that.

The best thing about being vegan is feeling good about what I eat, trying lots of new things, feeling informed about my choices, knowing I've made the decision that works best for me and my body

The most challenging thing is having to explain protein to everyone I meet.

I think everyone deserves to know where their food comes from and what their choices are. There is so much misinformation out there about nutrition, not to mention the reality of animal agriculture. Children should be taught about these issues. They are smart and deserve to be treated with respect around these issues.

## **Jeffrey, 56 years old, lives in the UK, vegan for 6-9 years**

### **Jeffrey is Jewish and describes himself as 'religious'**

I became vegetarian through Judaism and became vegan after learning more about animal suffering. Now I am also motivated by concern for environment, personal health and religious teachings. The animals are what keep me dedicated to veganism

To me, veganism means non-violence, non-oppression. I work for a vegan charity and never eat or wear animal products.

The best thing about being vegan is feeling a sense of oneness with all life.

The most challenging thing is non-vegans