

Permission to Eat Meat

Introduction

Where's the Beef?

After creating humans, Hashem blesses them that they should be fruitful and rule the earth, fish, birds, and animals. Hashem then speaks of the diets of both man and animal:

(כט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת כָּל הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ פֶּרִי עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ. (ל) וּלְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל רוֹמֵשׁ עַל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת כָּל יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וַיְהִי כֵן.

(29)

Among the food listed are fruits, vegetables, and grasses, but, surprisingly, not meat. How is this omission to be explained? Were man and beast originally meant to be herbivores?

Contrasting Command

The omission of meat in the above command to Adam is even more striking when one compares it with the very similar one given to Noach in the aftermath of the flood. There, too, Hashem promises Noach dominion over the animals and then speaks of his diet:

(ג) כָּל רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־רֶקַע עֵשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל. (ד) אֲדָבָר בֶּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ. (ה) וְאֵד אֶת דְּמָמָם לְנִפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם אֲדָרֵשׁ מִיָּד כָּל חַיָּה אֲדָרֵשְׁנוּ וּמִיָּד הָאָדָם מִיָּד אִישׁ אֶחָיו אֲדָרֵשׁ אֶת נֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם.

(3)

Here, Hashem appears to expand man's food intake to include all living creatures. Hashem warns, though, that the permission to kill for food does not extend to killing humans; shedding human blood is prohibited.

- How does this command relate to the earlier one? Does it represent a new directive, undoing an earlier prohibition, or was meat always allowed, even if not mentioned?
- If this is indeed a new permission, what led to the change? If not, why was meat not explicitly included in the command to Adam?
- Hashem says nothing to Noach about a revised diet for animals. As many animals are predators, is it to be assumed that this was always the case, or were they originally enjoined to eat only grasses as might be understood from Bereshit 1?
- What do the varying commands suggest regarding the ideal diet and the Torah's perspective on killing animals for food?

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Exegetical Approaches

Overview

Commentators differ regarding both how to resolve the textual question of when man was given permission to eat meat, and in how to interpret the theological significance of that directive. On one end of the spectrum, Ralbag asserts that meat was always permitted and is the natural food choice of humans. On the other end, R. Yosef Albo claims that vegetarianism is the ideal, and that meat was only allowed after the Flood as a concession to human frailties and degraded morality. According to his position, in the future, the prohibition will be renewed.

Others suggest that although meat might not have always been permitted, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with killing for food. Thus, R. Saadia asserts that killing animals was prohibited at the beginning of time only for practical reasons, lest a species become extinct, while Radak asserts that eating meat was saved to be a reward for Noach. Rashba uniquely suggests that although Adam was allowed to eat meat, he lost the privilege when he sinned by eating of the Tree of Knowledge, and it was restored only after his sin was atoned for through the Flood.

Never Prohibited

Eating meat was permitted from the beginning of time, and even Adam was always allowed to eat animals.

SOURCES: Philo, R. Yaakov of Kefar Chanan in Bereshit Rabbah, R. Saadia Gaon #1, Yefet b. Eli the Karaite, Ralbag, Shadal

Before the Flood: "הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זָרַע ... לֶאֱכֹלָה" – According to this position, these words were not intended to proscribe man's consumption of meat. The exegetes differ, though, in their interpretations of the verse:

- **Speaking of the norm** – R. Saadia explains that Hashem mentioned only vegetation and fruits because these are mankind's major food source, while meat is a luxury eaten only much less often.
- **Description rather than command** – Ralbag¹ asserts that these words are not a command to man at all but rather a further description of man's creation and a statement of natural law.² Hashem is simply saying that He created humans with the capacity to eat vegetation, even though grasses and plants are far from man's nature and one might have not expected him to possess this capability.³
- **Contrast to animals** – Shadal asserts that the verse serves to contrast man, who is given seeds and fruit to eat, with animals who were given only grasses to consume. The difference highlights man's greater intellect (only he had knowledge to sow and plant) and flows from the prior blessing regarding man's dominion over the animal kingdom.

"And you shall rule over the fish" ("וַיִּרְדּוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם") – According to Shadal, this phrase alludes to the fact that Adam was allowed to kill animals for food. Shadal notes that it is impossible to rule over fish unless one takes them out of the water, and this inevitably leads to their deaths.⁴ Thus, it is clear that Hashem had no problem with man killing living beings for utilitarian purposes.

Why not mention meat explicitly?

- **Minority discounted** – According to R. Saadia, this case is similar to many others in which people focus on the majority and make no mention of a minority, even though they do not intend to exclude it.
- **Obvious** – For Ralbag, the ability of man to eat meat was obvious and thus did not need to be stated. It was his capability of eating vegetation which was surprising and needed to be mentioned.
- **Prevent unnecessary killing** – Shadal asserts that Hashem only alluded to the permission to eat meat rather than making it more explicit so as not to encourage man to spill blood.
- **Way of Torah** – Yefet the Karaite suggests that sometimes the Torah mentions something only at a later point, even though it was applicable earlier. He compares the situation here to the lists of pure and impure animals which are provided only in Devarim 14 but not in Parashat Noach, even though already Noach in Bereshit 7:2 needed to differentiate between them.⁵

Why speak of meat after the Flood, if already allowed? Ralbag and Shadal assert that Hashem explicitly states the permission to eat meat after the Flood, not to introduce a new command, but rather to juxtapose it with the new prohibition not to spill man's blood or to tear a limb from a live animal (אבר מן החי). Hashem warns that although man is allowed to kill animals, this leniency does not extend to people, and that additionally one is not allowed to act cruelly towards animals even for the purpose of eating.

"כִּי־רַק עֵשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל־" – The comparison to vegetation is difficult for this approach since there would seem to be no need for it, given that meat, too, had always been permitted. N. Rabban⁶ suggests that the words should not be viewed as an allusion back to Bereshit 1. Rather, in the context of the new prohibition of shedding blood, Hashem reaffirms that there is no ethical problem in killing animals, just as there is none in eating vegetation.

Proofs from nature – Shadal attempts to prove from the physiology of humans that Hashem could never have intended for man to eat only vegetables. Man's teeth and body were created with the capacity to eat and digest meat, not just greens.⁷ If Hashem had not wanted man to be carnivorous, He would not have equipped his body with such capabilities.⁸

Philosophical motivations – Can Hashem change His mind? Ralbag is bothered by the idea that Hashem's will might change. He asserts that it is not possible that Hashem would originally prohibit meat from mankind and then change His mind to allow it after the Flood.⁹

Evaluation of eating meat – This position does not view vegetarianism as an ideal and sees no problem with killing animals for food.

Sacrifices before the Flood – This position might suggest that Hevel's role as shepherd and the sacrifice of sheep support the idea that meat was permitted also prior to the Flood.¹⁰

Were animals always carnivorous? According to this position, animals, too, were always allowed to eat meat.¹¹ In fact, R. Saadia points to the fact that many animals are predators as evidence that meat was always allowed. Had it not been, there should have been a verse after the Deluge explicitly permitting meat to them as well.

Messianic times – "וְאָרְיָה כְּבֹקֵר יֹאכֵל תֶּבֶן" – Shadal explains that the verse is not meant to be read literally but is rather an analogy teaching that in the future the strong will no longer oppress and take advantage of

the weak. It has nothing to do with a change in eating habits or the ideal diet in the Messianic era.



Prohibited After Adam's Sin Until the Flood

Adam was initially allowed to eat meat, but he lost this privilege after his sin in the Garden of Eden. Permission was restored after the Flood atoned for all of mankind's sins.

SOURCES: Rashba, Akeidat Yitzchak, Tzeror Hamor #2

Before the Flood: "הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע ... לֶאֱכֹלָה" – According to this position, this command was first given to Adam only after he sinned by eating of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden.¹² Originally Adam was permitted to eat meat, but after the sin Hashem limited his food to vegetation.¹³

Why the change? Rashba explains that in sinning, man let his physical side overcome his intellectual side, lowering him to the level of animals. Once he was no longer distinguishable from beasts or superior to them, he lost the privilege of killing them for his own purposes.¹⁴ The Akeidat Yitzchak compares it to the punishment of the snake, whose food source is also demoted (to dirt) after the sin.¹⁵

After the Flood: "כָּל רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לֶאֱכֹלָה" – Since the Flood atoned for Adam's sin and killed off all sinners, afterwards Hashem renewed the permission to eat meat. However, He accompanied the statement with a reminder that spilling human blood is prohibited.

Sacrifices before the Flood – Rashba asserts that even when meat was forbidden as a food source, it was still permitted to sacrifice animals to Hashem.¹⁶

Parallel cases – Rashba suggests that the stages here parallel the stages regarding the permission granted to eat meat for pleasure (בשר תאוה) in the desert.¹⁷ He suggests that initially this was permitted, but with the sin of the Golden Calf, it was prohibited and only sacrificial meat was allowed. With their entry into Israel following their long atoning sojourn in the desert, the nation was forgiven and their permission to eat meat was renewed.

Evaluation of eating meat – This position views eating animals as the norm and a sign of man's superiority, while a diet lacking meat is considered a punishment.

Were animals always carnivorous? According to the Akeidat Yitzchak, animals (in contrast to humans) were actually never given permission to eat meat and were really meant to be herbivores. This is consistent with his theory that every creature is meant to eat of the creatures on the level below him in the hierarchy of living beings. He claims that the fact that there are predators among animals today is only a remnant of the corruption of their nature during the generation of the Flood.

Messianic times – "וְאָרְיָה כְּבִקְרָא יֵאָכֵל תִּבְּן" – The Akeidat Yitzchak asserts that this verse describes the return of animals to their natural state of being herbivores, but not to any change in the diet of people.



First Permitted Only After the Flood

Man was not given permission to eat meat until after the Flood. Commentators differ in their understanding of the reason for this change:

Permission as a Reward

As a reward for caring for the animals in the ark, Noach and his descendants were granted permission to eat meat.

SOURCES: R. Yosef Bekhor Shor, Radak, Ramban, Ran

Before the Flood: "הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע ... לֶאֱכֹלָה" – According to these sources, this directive limited man's intake to vegetation.¹⁸ Ran explains that in light of the earlier command to rule over the fish and birds, Hashem needed to explain that such authority did not extend to the eating of these animals.

After the Flood: "כָּל רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לֶאֱכֹלָה" – According to these commentators, this verse represents a new command, granting permission to eat all animals,¹⁹ and thereby removing the previous prohibition.

"כִּי־רָק עֵשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל" – According to this position, this verse harks back to the original command of Chapter 1. Hashem again compares meat to vegetation to teach Noach that the two are now equal and that he can now eat meat just as he had previously eaten greens.

Why was meat originally prohibited?

- **Saved for later** – According to Radak, there was no fundamental reason for the original prohibition. Hashem simply wanted to save meat as a future reward for Noach.²⁰
- **Prevent suffering** – Ran asserts that since animals can feel pain, man was not allowed to kill them. He says that this is the reason why, even later, when eating meat is permitted, one is not allowed to cause animals undue suffering.
- **Equal Status** – Ramban assumes that man was prohibited from killing animals since the two were similar in nature (both are able to feel pain and desire to escape death).²¹

Why the change?

- Radak views the permission to eat meat as simply compensation for Noach's labor and good deeds. Ran adds that Hashem might have also wanted to ease Noach's pain and loneliness in losing his world through the Flood.
- R"Y Bekhor Shor and Ramban suggest that there was a more fundamental change. R"Y Bekhor Shor says that in saving the animals, Noach gained certain rights over them and they became his to do with as he pleased. Ramban implies that Noach's righteous conduct revealed that man was in fact superior to the animals, thus removing the original reason for the prohibition.²²

Sacrifices before the Flood – Radak asserts that even though Hevel was allowed to kill animals so as to sacrifice to Hashem, he himself did not partake of the meat.²³

Evaluation of eating meat

- According to Radak, there is nothing wrong with eating meat, and the existence of predators is built into nature. In fact, it would seem that Hashem considers meat, rather than vegetables, the more lofty food, and He thus saved it as a reward.
- R"Y Bekhor Shor and Ramban suggest more simply that there is a hierarchy to living beings, and thus, as long as man is superior to animals, he has the right to slaughter them for consumption.

Were animals always carnivorous? According to Radak, predatory animals were created as such, and were allowed to eat meat long before the Flood. However, he asserts that at the very beginning of creation (and on the ark) animals did not eat each other, and survived instead on vegetation, for otherwise the various species could not have survived.²⁴

Messianic times – "וְאֶרֶץ כְּנָקָר יֵאָכֵל תִּבֶּן" – Radak asserts that the verses in Yeshayahu 11 do not imply a change in the nature of animals in the future, but rather constitute a promise that predators will neither prey in the land of Israel nor cause damage there.²⁵



Permission as a Concession

After the Flood, mankind was allowed to eat animals as a concession to human frailty.

SOURCES: Midrash Aggadah (Buber), R. Yosef ibn Kaspi, R. Yosef Albo, Abarbanel, Tzeror HaMor #1, Sforno, R. A"Y Kook, U. Cassuto

Before the Flood: "הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע ... לֶאֱכֹלָה" – According to these sources, the command to Adam only mentions vegetation and purposefully excluded animals.

After the Flood: "כָּל רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לֶאֱכֹלָה" – It was first with Hashem's blessing to Noach after the Flood that meat was permitted.

Why was meat originally prohibited?

- **No death yet** – The Midrash Aggadah asserts that originally (before Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden) no one was supposed to die, so killing even for food was prohibited.²⁶
- **Sanctity of life** – R. Kook and Cassuto explain more simply that the prohibition stems from the sanctity of all life. Though man might rule over animals, he cannot ignore their vitality. All life is sacred, even that of animals.
- **Unethical to animals** – R. Kook also maintains that this prohibition is similar to others which try to minimize the pain or suffering of animals.
- **Killing leads to cruelty** – Ibn Kaspi and R"Y Albo focus instead on the deleterious effects on man's moral fiber, asserting that the act of killing leads man to become cruel.²⁷ R. Albo adds that the consumption of animals tarnishes the soul while the Tzeror HaMor speaks of its detrimental effect on the intellect.

Why the change? All of these commentators agree that permission to eat meat was granted only as a second resort (בדיעבד) because of the circumstances of the Flood era, but they differ regarding the specifics:

- **Practical necessity** – Abarbanel maintains that the permission was granted out of necessity. Since the Flood had destroyed all produce, Hashem had to allow Noach to eat of animals, or they would have perished from famine. Abarbanel does not explain, why then, the prohibition was not renewed after vegetation regrew.
- **Man weakened** – Sforno and Tzeror HaMor assert that the people who lived after the Flood were weaker than Adam's generation. Sforno maintains that the quality of the world's atmosphere and vegetation had deteriorated during the Flood, while Tzeror HaMor points to the shortened lifespans of humans. To compensate for this frailty, Hashem allowed humans to eat meat.
- **Teach humans their proper status** – R. Albo maintains that one of the problems of humankind had been that they did not realize that they were different from animals, leading to the principle that "might is right". To ensure that man recognized their higher stature, Hashem allowed man to eat of the animals.
- **Degraded morals** – R. Kook and U. Cassuto suggest that due to man's degraded morality, Hashem decided to hold him to a lower standard than the earlier ideal. If man was to have an a violent nature and an inclination to kill, better that he channel it into killing animals than fellow humans.

Evaluation of eating meat – This position maintains that vegetarianism is the ideal and that, a priori, man should never have been permitted to eat meat.²⁸

Were animals always carnivorous? According to this approach, predatory animals, too, were originally herbivores.

Messianic times – "וְאִרְיָה כְּבָקָר יֹאכֵל תֶּבֶן"

- Sforno, R. Kook, and Cassuto all suggest that, in the future, the world will revert back to the ideal of creation. Cassuto points to Yeshayahu 11 to prove that in Messianic times even animals will become herbivores, and no longer eat one another.²⁹
- Abarbanel agrees but limits this to the Land of Israel.³⁰ He posits that predatory animals were created as punitive tools of Hashem. In the era of the Mashiach this will not be necessary as evil will have disappeared and the Mashiach himself will mete out justice.

אבר מן החי – R. Yose b. Ibo in Bereshit Rabbah suggests that the prohibition of eating a limb from a live animal is first given to Noach, because it was only then that eating meat at all is permitted. Beforehand such a prohibition would be unnecessary as it was subsumed in the general prohibition of eating meat.



Original Prohibition was only a Practical Necessity

Adam was not prohibited from eating meat for any fundamental reason, but only due to the scarcity of animals at the time, or because he simply lacked knowledge of how to cook them.

SOURCES: R. Saadia Gaon #2, Hoil Moshe

Before the Flood: "הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת כָּל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע ... לֶאֱכֹלָה" – This original command prescribed a vegetarian diet.

After the Flood: "כָּל רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָהּ" – After the Flood, Hashem granted man permission to eat meat just as he had earlier eaten greens.

Why was meat originally prohibited?

- **Scarcity of animals** – R. Saadia posits that Hashem prohibited man from eating meat at the beginning of creation only due to the scarcity of animals.³¹ Had men been predators, there was a real possibility that many species might have become extinct.³²
- **Lack of technology** – Hoil Moshe asserts that though Hashem prefers that man's intake of meat be limited, He nonetheless allows it in moderation. In the beginning of the world, though, man had not yet learned to cook or roast meat, and raw meat did not appeal to his palate, so he naturally ate mainly vegetation.³³

Why the change?

- According to R. Saadia's approach, it is surprising that permission to eat meat would be granted immediately after the Flood, considering that at that point, too, there was a scarcity of animals.³⁴
- Hoil Moshe maintains that by this point civilization had progressed enough that man had learned how to cook meat.

Sacrifices before the Flood – R. Saadia asserts that the text specifies that Kayin and Hevel brought their sacrifices only "מִקֶּזֶחַ יָמִים" to teach that before killing any animals, they had waited for them to multiply enough so that the loss of one would not harm the species.

Were animals always carnivorous?

- **No** – According to R. Saadia, animals, too, were originally prohibited from killing one another to ensure their survival.
- **Yes** – According to Hoil Moshe, from the beginning, animals were able to eat one another since they had no problem eating raw meat.³⁵ As proof he points to Noach's sending of the raven outside the ark, which he assumes was for the purpose of finding carcasses to eat.

Evaluation of eating meat – These commentators disagree in their evaluation. While R. Saadia assumes that there is no issue at all in eating meat, Hoil Moshe assumes that though Hashem allows it, He nonetheless prefers that it be in moderation. Thus, too, when Hashem permits the Nation of Israel to eat meat, He warns that they should not do so continuously, but only when they are filled with desire for it.

Messianic times – "וְאָרְיָה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל תֶּבֶן" – Hoil Moshe asserts that the verses in Yeshayahu are a metaphoric way of describing a future of peace, where the poor are not oppressed by the strong. The verses are not to be rendered literally as describing an actual change in the nature of animals.

Polemical motivations – M. Zucker³⁶ suggests that R. Saadia might be motivated by a polemic with Karaites such as D. Alkumsi. These Karaites asserted that meat was allowed only after Noach offered a sacrifice,³⁷ and thus they argued that in exile, when there are no longer sacrifices, meat is no longer permitted. To distance himself from such a possibility, R. Saadia posits that the prohibition was purely technical.

¹ Similarly, Philo writes: "Perhaps the present expression has no reference to eating food, but rather to the possession of the power to do so."

² As proof that the words are an extension of the description of creation, Ralbag points to the fact that the words are followed by the statement "and it was so", the same phrase that follows the description of the other facets of creation. Cf. R. D"Z Hoffmann who makes a similar point.

³ Apparently, according to Ralbag even though Hashem also created man and animals with the ability to eat meat, this was not mentioned explicitly as this was more obvious, since humans and animals are much more similar to each other than to plants.

⁴ He argues against those who claim that "ruling" might refer to benefiting from the animals (making use of fish oils or the like) by pointing out that other instances of the root "רדה" all connote some type of oppression of the other, leading to their subservience. See the usage of the root in Vayikra 25:43, Vayikra 26:17, and Melakhim I 5:4.

⁵ Other commentators (e.g. Reconstructed Rashbam Bereshit 7:2) explain that the terms "הַטְּהֹרָה" and "לֹא טְהֹרָה" (in Bereshit 7:2) are the language of the narrative voice, and Noach was merely given a list of each but not the laws of Kashrut.

⁶ See his article, "שאלת אכילת בשר בפרשת בראשית" in Tarbiz 21 (1950): 25-29.

⁷ The existence of canine teeth that are made to tear meat suggest that man was meant to do so. In addition, man's gut does not chew its cud, suggesting that he was not intended to be a pure herbivore.

⁸ The Hoil Moshe questions this assertion. Since Hashem is omniscient, He might have created man with this ability knowing that he was to eat meat in the future. In addition, there are many people who eat only fruits and grains despite having the ability to also meat. For further critique of Shadal's arguments, see R"E Samet's article, "אדם הראשון לא הותר לו בשר לאכילה" pp.4-5, n.14.

⁹ Ralbag notes that one might argue that when Hashem later prohibits the Israelites from eating certain types of food, this is also an instance of His changing His mind. Ralbag argues that this is not comparable since Hashem simply wanted to distinguish the nation of Israel from others, and thus prevented them from eating some of the foods allowed to all others. This, thus, is not an example of Hashem altering a fundamental principle, but rather only a case of adding obligations to a specific group of people so as to elevate them.

¹⁰ Shadal writes that when Hevel sacrificed "מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאֲנוֹ וּמִחֲלֵבֵנוֹ" this refers to the fatty parts of the animals, suggesting that Hevel offered only these to Hashem and ate the rest himself. Cf. the discussion in Bavli Zevachim 116a regarding whether Hevel had brought an Olah (which is totally consumed) or Shelamim offering (which is shared by the person sacrificing). The former presumably understand "מִחֲלֵבֵנוֹ" to mean "of the fatty animals" while the latter read, "of the fat".

¹¹ R. Saadia is the only one to address the question explicitly, but all of Ralbag's and Shadal's arguments also apply to animals as well.

¹² Accordingly, the verse is placed out of chronological order. Rashba might explain that the sin occurred so early in history that the Torah views the prohibition as existing almost from the beginning of time.

¹³ Perhaps this verse is equivalent to Hashem's curse to Adam that "by the sweat of your brow will you eat bread" (Bereshit 3:19). Now that meat was prohibited, man would have to toil extra in the fields.

¹⁴ Just as a person is not allowed to kill a fellow human because the two are on equal footing, so too in this era when man proved himself to be similar to animals, he was not permitted to kill them.

¹⁵ The Akeidat Yitzchak asserts that each species is meant to partake from the food source underneath them in the hierarchy of living beings. Thus humans are meant to eat animals, animals to eat plants, and plants to derive their sustenance from the ground, etc.

¹⁶ From Rashba's words, "חלק גבוה לא נאסר" it sounds as if he assumes that *only* Hashem's portion was allowed. Though Hevel could sacrifice, he was not allowed to partake of the offering. Rashba would read the verse, "וְהִבֵּל הִבְיָא גַם־הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאֲנוֹ וּמִחֲלִבָּהּ" to mean that Hevel took from the choicest and most fatty animals as a sacrifice, not that he sacrificed only the fat and ate the rest.

¹⁷ See Devarim 12:20-28. Cf. R. D"Z Hoffmann who also notes the parallel to the evolving laws of eating meat for pleasure, but does not associate these with sin and punishment.

¹⁸ Ramban asserts that it simultaneously served to slightly elevate man above other creatures since only he was permitted seeds and fruit, while the birds and beasts were only given grasses.

¹⁹ Even though the verse actually mentions only "רֶמֶשׂ", Ramban assumes that the word includes all living creatures from bird to fish, while Radak suggests that the verse is missing a "ויו" and should read as if written, "all creeping creatures **and** all that are alive." See Jubilees who replaces the word "רֶמֶשׂ" with explicit mention of beast, animal and bird.

Cf. the opinion of Shelomo Miller (brought by Shadal) who learns from the specific mention of "רֶמֶשׂ" that actually only such creatures (who do not have blood) were allowed while all other animals (who do have blood) were still prohibited. It is unclear, though, how he would explain all the cases in which people (from Avraham on) eat animals in Tanakh.

²⁰ Radak does not explain why Hashem decided to save this food source as a reward rather than compensating Noach in some other fashion.

²¹ The Ramban and Ran are very similar in their approaches, but while Ramban highlights the problem of killing an almost-equal, the Ran focuses more on the suffering that animals will feel.

²² He does not say this explicitly, but this would follow from his words.

²³ He points to the disagreement in Bavli Zevachim 116a regarding the nature of Hevel's offering and suggests that even those who say that he brought a Shelamim would have to say that Hevel gave the leftover meat to the birds or animals. [See below that he maintains that animals were always carnivorous.]

²⁴ Cf. R. Saadia Gaon below.

²⁵ Thus, it will be as *if* the lion is eating grains.

²⁶ One might have thought that as soon as Adam sinned and mortality was introduced into the world, meat would have been permitted. The Midrash answers that Hashem delayed the permission so that "the sinner should not benefit from his sin."

²⁷ Ibn Kapsi points out that the many laws that teach one to act mercifully to animals and nature help to humble man and lead him to recognize that he is not all that different from them.

²⁸ See R. Asher of Lunel (cited by the Avudraham) who suggests that the reason the blessing "שהכל נהיה" uses the verb "היה" and not "ברא" (the verb used in other blessings) is that animals were not originally created for the purpose of food.

²⁹ See R. Bachya who suggests the same though he understands the varying commands to Adam and Noach differently.

³⁰ The verse in Yeshayahu specifies, "לֹא יִרְעוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל הָרָמָשִׁי".

³¹ Cf. Radak above who posits that animals did not eat of each other both at the beginning of creation and during the Flood for this reason.

³² Cf. Ramban's similar explanation to the prohibition of "וְאֵת בְּנוֹ לֹא תִשְׁחָטוּ בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד" in Vayikra 22:28. See also the Karaite commentary published by Mann in JQR 15:3, p. 372-373: "אבל הברואים אשר נבראו עם האדם היו אסורים לשחוט כי ברכם [נם] [כך] ולרבות ולא לשחוט עד אשר יקימו בניהם תחתם ועד...אשר יגדלו בניהם וישיגו גם הם לפריה ולרביה אז יכשר שיתיר להם שחיטתם ואכילתם ושחיטתם"

³³ Cf. Midrash Aggadah which suggests that until the time of Nimrod no one ate meat since he was the first to learn how to hunt.

³⁴ R. Saadia is actually not explicit that permission was first granted after the Flood, and might actually hold that as soon as animals had multiplied sufficiently, man was allowed to kill them. This, in fact, is what he implies in his explanation of the term "וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים" by the story of Kayin and Hevel, where he suggests that Hevel waited to sacrifice of his sheep until he had many of them. Nonetheless, based on R. Saadia's logic, the prohibition should have been renewed (or have remained in place) after the Flood and the explicit permission specifically at that point needs explaining. Unfortunately, R. Saadia's comments on the verse are missing.

³⁵ In fact, he suggests that watching predatory beasts eat other animals is what gave man the idea that they might be edible for man as well.

³⁶ See M. Zucker, על תרגום רס"ג לתורה: פרשנות, הלכה ופולמיקה בתרגום התורה של ר' סעדיה גאון (New York, 1959): 444-446.

³⁷ Cf. Midrash Aggadah (Buber) and Ibn Ezra who also mention that Noah's sacrifice is what permitted meat.

