

UNIT  
**6**

# Are Humans More Valuable Than Animals?

**Have you ever heard about the term "Judeo-Christian values?"**

Although the world has not yet adopted the 7 Mitzvot of Bnei Noch, they have been influenced by the Torah over the ages. This term refers to the belief in the G-d of Israel, in His ten commandments and have adopted and accept the moral laws (mishpatim). It is a belief in a universal and not relative morality.

**What is Maimonides' viewpoint over the Christians and Moslems?**

(Rambam Hilchot Melachim 11): " all these things of Jesus Christ, and those of the *muslims* that stood after him, were merely to straighten the path for Messiah, and to fix the world to work Hashem together."

What do you understand from this Rambam quotation? Is it it a positive thing that these two religious have on the world? And in retrospect?

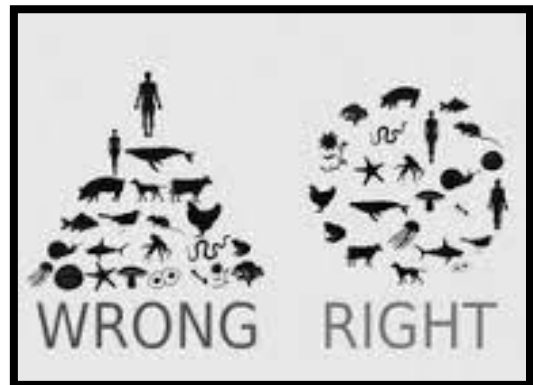


## Audio Transcript

# Are Humans More Valuable Than Animals? / By Dennis Prager

## Part A - Are You More Valuable Than an Animal?

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 G-d based Judeo-Christian value system **renders** humans infinitely more valuable than any **humanistic** value system



## Part B- Created In The Image of G-d vs Being Simply Material (00:43)

The reason is simple. If there is no G-d, 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 G-d, 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 G-d and therefore **infinitely** valuable.

## Part C - Two Crucial Consequences of Denying Judeo - Christian Values (1:15)

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.

### Examples 1

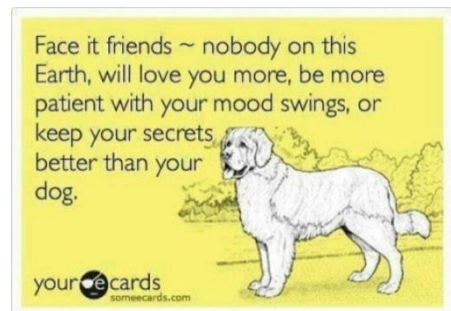
#### Saving A Dog Rather Than A Person (1:35)

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.

[01:53] 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's no reason for **elevating** human worth over that of an animal.

### Example 2

#### PETA Equates Barbequing a Chicken to Burning Jews In The Holocaust (2:28)

That's why people **estranged** from Judeo-Christian values, including many Jews and Christians, **support** programs such as Holocaust on your plate.

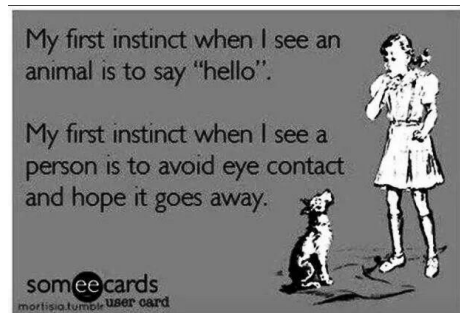
Holocaust on your plate is a campaign **developed** by the animal **rights** group "People for the **Ethical Treatment** of Animals", "PETA", that teaches that there is no difference between the barbecuing of chickens in America and the burning of Jews in the Holocaust.

Why? Because a human and a chicken are of equal worth.

### Example 3

#### Risking Human Life (Firefighters) for Saving Animals (3:04)

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.



### Example 4

#### Thinking It Would Be Wrong To Experiment On Animals Even If It Would Lead To Curing People

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.

### Example 5

#### It Would be Wrong to Kill A Pig to Obtain a Heart Valve. (3:23)

In fact many animal rights **advocates** believe that even to save human life it would be wrong to kill a pig to **obtain** a heart valve.

### Example 6

#### Slaughtering tens of millions, claiming they were worthless (3:57)

The 20th century showed **visibly** 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 "subhuman". And only by rejecting Judeo-Christian values could communist regimes slaughter those they called "class enemies". **Individual** human life meant nothing. Meanwhile human slavery was abolished only in the Judeo Christian world.

### Example 7

#### The Human Fetus Is Worthless If Its Mother Deems It So. (5:02)

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

### Example 8

#### Environmentalists Denigrate Humans' Worth. (5:11)

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.

## Comprehension questions and discussions

### Pair Work

#### Part A

1. What is one of the biggest differences between Judeo- Christian values and secular values? What is the basic disagreement and basis of each side?
2. Argue both sides: Are you more valuable than an animal?
  - a. Judeo- Christian Values
  - b. Secular Humanism
3. What are two consequences?
4. Over the course of thirty years, \_\_\_\_\_ of the high school and college students answered that if they had to save their \_\_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_\_, they voted \_\_\_\_\_ the person!

#### Speaking

Retell **example # 1**. Mingle in class and tell and listen to the example as many times as possible! Ask them their personal opinions on both viewpoints.

#### Part B

5. What campaign was developed PETA?
6. Who supports this campaign?
7. What does PETA stand for?
8. What is their motto?
9. How can they state such a thing?

#### Speaking

Mingle in class, tell and listen to that **example #2** as many times as possible! Spend at least 10 minutes on that exercise!

## Part C

10. What did the lady tell the fire fighters (Example # 3)?
11. Why, in your opinion did she refer to her cats as babies?
12. What was the end of that scenario? It turned out that...



### Speaking

Mingle in class and tell and listen to that **example #3**.

## Part D

13. What do more and more people believe concerning experimenting on animals?
14. What is the next example given (that has to do with a pig)?
15. Can you identify the four illustrated dictators in example 6?
16. How were the Non –Arian groups seen by the Nazis?
17. How was the worth of people determined in the communist countries?
18. What's the meaning of "Class enemies"?
19. Why did all that happen?
20. Why, in your opinion, was slavery abolished in the Judeo –Christian world?
21. Where does the word "environmentalists" stem from? Explain what is precious in their opinion.
22. On what does it depend whether you're more valuable than a cat, dog or tree?
23. Which other movements do you know? Name at least two more and tell in groups of four what their activities are.

## Sharing stories

- Do you anyone that was in the Soviet Union at the time of the Iron Curtain?
- Do you what the communists' oppressions were?
- Share with your classmates any story you've heard about that era.
- Share with your classmates any heroic story about Jews in the Holocaust.

## Presentation

1. Prepare a small speech about this unit. Convey the same idea in your words. Use the flow chart and you don't need to use the exact words at all. Be spontaneous.  
The class should split into two groups, and all the students in each group should say the speech in their turn.  
Remember: It's good to stop here and there to make sure your classmates are with you.
2. Be able to read this article fluently in front of the class! Try to do it with as much intonation and emotion as possible. Pauses are also important!

Summarizing Table		
Those who deny Judeo- Christian values		
Declaration	Denial that we were created in G-d's image	
<b>Consequently</b>	We are equated with animals. Why elevate human worth over that of an animal? Both are just material...	If there's no higher authority, people make moral decisions based on how they FEEL.
<b>Examples:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Preferring to save a dog and not a person.</li> <li>2) PETA equates barbecuing a chicken to burning Jew in the holocaust</li> <li>3) Risking human life (firefighters) for saving animals (Preferring them over humans!)</li> <li>4) Thinking it would be wrong to experiment on animals even if it would lead to cure people.</li> <li>5) It would be wrong to kill a pig to obtain a heart valve.</li> <li>6) Slaughtering tens of millions, claiming they were sub-humans and worthless, or "class enemies".</li> <li>7) The human fetus is worthless if its mother deems it so.</li> <li>8) Environmentalists denigrate humans' worth. They value rivers, trees and mountains.</li> </ol>	



## Vocabulary

- A. The following words are divided into categories: positive, negative and neutral. Would you change the location of some of them? Discuss it in groups of three!**

+ Positive association	Neutral	- Negative association
Advocate	Authority	Abandoned
Created	Carbon (atoms)	Against
Cure	case	Denial
Developed	composed	Murdered
Elevating	concerns	Rejected
Equated	Declared	Slaughtering
Ethical	Determined	Trapped
Infinitely	Experiment	
Moral decisions	Image	
Precious	Individual	
Rights	Movement	
Sacred	Obtain	
Support	Parties	
Valuable	Post-	
Value system	Risked	
	Society	
	Various	
	Vote	

- B. Try to remember the context the above- written words appear in! Say whole sentences! Practice that in groups of three!**
- C. Competition! Two students at a time are competing with each other. They stand at the front of the class. The teacher or a third student is saying a certain word out of the above written list. The two competitors are supposed to say the context of that word as quickly as possible. Each pair has 3 chances to answer. The winner competes with another student (3x), until only ONE student is left- he is the lucky winner!**