

Spirit's Day Studies

The Writings of Jane Lead,
17th Century Christian Mystic



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Q & A

Abbreviations used in this study
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Jane Lead, the Philadelphians, and Vegetarianism

Question: Were the Philadelphians vegetarian? A friend of mine is a staunch advocate of veganism and is looking for historical backup.

Thank you for sending me the article, *Jacob Boehme and the Foundations of a Vegetarian Food Ideology* by Ken Albala; and for your question regarding the Philadelphians and vegetarianism. I will comment on the article after first touching on Jane Lead's (JL) writings.

First of all, I do not detect even a hint of vegetarianism in the writings of Jane Lead. If she were a vegetarian, and if she believed that consuming animal meats would impede the resurrection-life, I'm convinced she would have mentioned it. In addition, neither Virgin-Wisdom nor Jesus Christ mention meat prohibitions in any of the numerous dreams and communications that were given to JL.

GOAT'S MEAT IN JANE LEAD'S WRITINGS

In her journal entry dated November 10, 1673, Virgin-Wisdom presented to Jane a charger (platter) with *"a kid lying in a composition liquor of milk, oil, and blood, with several spices such as spikenard, myrrh and cinnamon, giving forth strong odors."* This meal was declared as consumable, not only for JL, but for the Father, Son, and Mother as well:

I was further emboldened to ask my Mother Wisdom, *How and when she would compound that savory meat on which the blessing is entailed? For I am as one impatient, till the birth-right be confirmed to me.* Upon which there was presented as in a charger, a kid lying in a composition liquor of milk, oil, and blood, with several spices such as spikenard, myrrh and cinnamon, giving forth strong odors. Then *Wisdom* called to me, "O go and see what I have compounded and prepared: a banquet-feast, where your Father will come down, with His dear Son your Elder Brother, and I your Mother. **We will hereof take and feed,** that the Fountain of *Jacob* may be your blessing... [1F 1:18]

LAMB'S MEAT IN JANE LEAD'S WRITINGS

In *Fountain of Gardens, Vol. 1*, in a section titled “*The Lamb’s Feast*,” JL is again presented with meat in a charger, however this time it’s lamb’s meat:

Then a Charger was let down to me, with a Lamb that had been slain, and the Word said, “Take hereof and eat. This is Paschal Meat.” Then said I, “Lord, not so. This is raw and undressed. **Who can feed hereof?**” Then this was drawn up. And I beheld one as in the figure and stature of a man, but not in a fleshly image, only the fashion of a man all bright, as the body of heaven for clearness. Out of his mouth went a white mist or breath, having seven pipes or conveying powers, one of each side, and another at the navel, where somewhat was, as the form of a belly, but all after a very lustrous manner. Out of his mouth went forth pure breath and air. Then out of the pipes, that were fixed on the breasts, sprouted milk. Then from the heart went forth streams of blood. And upon one side grew out a branch bearing olive-berries, then a stalk, which bore some kind of large solid grain. Then on the other side from the navel-pipe sprung clear crystal-water. After this manner did this spiritual body appear, and said to me, “Draw near. For this is the great Day of the Feast, where the spiritual body conveys itself in variety. **Here is high spirited blood and flesh for the strong in Spirit to digest.**” [1F 15:14]

You will notice that upon the presentation of the lamb’s meat, JL did not object to the meat itself—she only objected that the lamb was uncooked. If she were vegetarian, or if she considered abstaining from literal meats to be imperative, JL most certainly would have objected to the meat itself—not merely the fact that it was raw.

FISH IN JANE LEAD'S WRITINGS

In JL’s writings fish is also mentioned as good for food. JL even went so far as say that fish was a “type” of the new man; as living in water, which represents their being under continual washings:

[1F 2:14] §.It was now given me to understand what this arrived at. The first angler represents the forward and willing mind, that would go fishing, to draw up out of the broad river, where the Everlasting God is to be understood, who is said to be the *Place of Broad Rivers*, in which holy spirits live and swim as their proper element. Flesh cannot live in water; but fish is of another kind. **The Holy Ghost presents their nature as a similitude for the new creation, that will live and move much in the Watery Element, which is a degree much beyond the earth, though under purgations by fire. Neither is fish so gross or corruptible: But they are still under a washing stream, and therefore not used for sacrifices in the Old Law; whereas all that is of flesh was ordained for burnt offerings,** that it may pass through the purification in the flames of the altar. Now what the sea and rivers of this kind feed and generate, must signify a generation of creatures that is nothing so coarse and brutish as are the earthly beasts.

JESUS WAS NOT VEGETARIAN

There is no question that Jesus was not vegetarian. He ate both lamb and fish. For 33 years he obeyed the laws of the Passover meal and dined on the Paschal Lamb.¹ As for fish, He not only ate it, but miraculously fed fish to a crowd of 5,000², and a second time to over 4,000. (What I find intriguing is that the Bible mentions Jesus eating lamb *before* His resurrection,³ and fish *after* His resurrection.⁴ I'm sure this has some sort of spiritual significance.)

A VEGETABLE DIET “SUSCEPTIBLE TO DEMONS?”

In his book *The Spiritual World*, Clarence Larkin states “It is a well-known fact that a ‘vegetable diet’ renders the body more susceptible to spiritual forces than a meat diet.”⁵ I'm not sure where this thought originated, but it is interesting that “vegetarianism is strongly linked with a number of religions that originated in ancient India.”⁶ I'm not saying a Christian should not be vegetarian. However it should be a matter of personal choice—and not out of adherence to some spiritual law.

KEN ALBALA ARTICLE

As for the article you sent, I cannot agree with the writer's thesis. By his own admission, Mr. Abala was attempting to draw out this conclusion (that Jacob Boehme may have been vegetarian) as a “challenge.”

My choice of Boehme was instigated a paragraph in Colin Spencer's history of vegetarianism (*The Heretic's Feast*) in which he asserts, 'He [Boehme] is almost impossible to read today, being turgid, deeply obscure and often quite batty.' Just my sort of writer, and I took this as a challenge.

Albala admits there is no evidence that Jacob Boehme was a vegetarian:

I should point out, incidentally, that there is absolutely no evidence that Boehme himself was a practising vegetarian. None of his biographers mentions this. Though the topic is mentioned, scattered randomly throughout his writings, there is also no one work, or even section of a work, that explicitly demands a vegetarian diet.

Boehme himself did not condemn eating meat. He did however condemned eating meat *in its blood*; and he gives the reason for this prohibition: The life of the animal *is in its blood*:

And here we must accurately consider wherein every region rejoices; for the Sun and stars apprehend not the divine light, as the essences of the soul [do], and yet only that soul which stands in the *new birth*; but they [the sun and stars] taste the sweetness which has imprinted [or imaged] itself in the tincture; for the blood of the heart, wherein the

¹ Luk. 22:8—15.

² Mat. 14:17-21.

³ Luk. 22:8—15.

⁴ Luk. 24:42-43.

⁵ *The Spiritual World* by Clarence Larkin, 1921, pg. 37.

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism_and_religion

soul moves, is so very sweet, that there is nothing to be compared to it. Therefore has God by *Moses* forbidden man to eat the flesh **in its blood**; for the life stands in it. For the bestial life ought not to be in man, that his spirit be not infected therewith. [3P 16:11]

Then of course there are several Biblical prohibitions concerning blood. Here are just a few:

Gen. 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

Deu. 12:23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

Lev. 3:17 It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

Lev. 7:26 Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings.

Lev. 17:12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.

Lev. 17:14 For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

Lev. 19:26 Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.

Deu. 12:23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

Deu.12:27 And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh.

The Bible does not forbid eating meat. The Bible forbids eating (drinking) blood; for according to the above passages, the *life* of the creature *is in the blood*. Therefore, it is not the flesh of animals that the Bible is concerned about: It's the *blood* of animals that can co-mingle with our own human blood (or life). I believe the commandment not to drink blood is still applicable to Christians today.⁷

Here in America the blood is properly drained from the animal before selling. Thus even a very rare steak contains no blood, though the juice ("purge" or water and protein) may appear pinkish or even light red. An important distinction between the blood of the animal and its juice is that blood forms clots—the juice does not.

This is my initial assessment of JL and vegetarianism; and I therefore presume the rest of the Philadelphians might have been in agreement.

In Christ Jesus,

Diane Guerrero

⁷ Acts 15:20, 29.