



Ahimsa



Mahaveer Award Presented to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

You are a great friend, guide and Guru to millions. Compassion and Ahimsa are a prerequisite for a happy world. You have brought the ancient wisdom of India to an increasingly troubled world. As a Vegetarian you are setting an example for the world to follow. We salute you.

Y.I.V. 17th May 2007 (House of Commons)

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Dear Friends

Those of us who are committed to reducing the suffering and exploitation of animals don't often get to hear good news. However we have had some small but significant victories recently and the efforts of thousands of dedicated individuals are beginning to pay off. Masterfoods, the company that produces Mars chocolate and other famous brand names, quickly reversed its decision to add rennet in their previously vegetarian brands. They were not expecting an avalanche of protest! On 11th January 2007, EU members agreed to permanently ban the import of wild birds into Europe for the pet trade. The EU used to import an average of 1.7 million birds per year. With the ban in place millions of wild birds will be saved. Animal Protection Agency (based in Brighton) along with hundreds of organisations worldwide played a crucial role in securing an end to this barbaric trade. In Austria a law has been passed prohibiting the use of wild animals in circuses. Just as slave trade was abolished, the abuse and suffering of animals will also come to an end, but we have to make it happen. Every one of us should do our bit to promote Ahimsa. Don't go to meat restaurants, don't buy leather goods, and don't give your money to businesses that exploit animals. Don't fall for current fads such as putting in wooden floors - the insatiable demand for wood is leading to the decimation of forests in central Africa. The animals living in these forests are being forced into smaller areas and are being hunted for meat. Buffaloes and elephants are being decimated. Almost 10 tonnes of what is called 'bush meat' may be reaching London every day - the human race is fast destroying the very source of its survival. So there is so much to do. Above all don't keep your vegetarianism to yourself! Talk about it, promote it and make at least one vegetarian a month!

In keeping with our fervent hope that vegetarianism remains India's great ideal we presented a Mahaveer Award to his holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar recently. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has a huge following in India and abroad. In January we also presented a Mahaveer Award to Sri Jaggi Maharaj who too has a huge following. When spiritual leaders like Swami Ramdev and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar begin to promote vegetarianism as they do, millions will be inspired to give up meat eating. A special thanks to Jyoti Mehta and Nisha and Kalpa Jhala for making the event at the House of Commons a great success. Our thanks also to Malcolm Wicks MP and Louise for making it all possible.

The Young Indian Vegetarians

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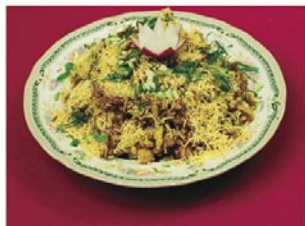
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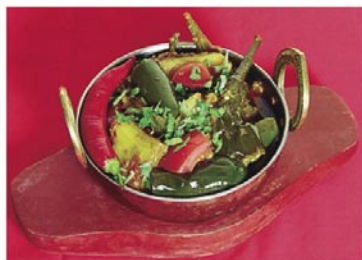
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Franchises Available in Chosen Areas

The following successful events took place since the last newsletter - this is our 27th year and our campaigns are relentless!

- 1 On **6th August 2006** I spoke at a multi faith meeting at Friends Meeting House in Brixton. I spoke on 'Faith and Food'. I said that for Hindus and Jains, diet, ahimsa, karma and reincarnation are all interlinked.
- 2 On **2nd August 2006** we kept a stall during the Janmastmi festival at the Hare Krishna temple in Watford. A special thanks to Janaki Mehta, Bakula and Kajal Bhatt for manning the stall. The following individuals agreed to give up meat eating and become vegetarian:
Piya Nath (Enfield), Vijay Mistry (Leicester), Rahdika Kalia, Ruchi Walia (Cranford, Middx.), Vilay Patel (Stanmore), Vasundhara Savarikar (Birmingham), Patricia Wright (Bedford), S. Soni (Rickmansworth), Mrs. Parmar (Leicester), Rishi Sehdev (Middx), Pritesh Kerai (Harrow), Kunal Bhimani (East Ham)
- 3 On **8th October** I travelled to Aylesbury. The Aylesbury Indian Association had organised a festival to celebrate Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. I said that all those who believe in Mahatma Gandhi's ideals should be vegetarian.
- 4 On **28th October** I went to Camberwell in Surrey. There I gave a talk at a Yoga retreat held at the Tekel Park. I said Ahimsa and compassion are the greatest ideals.
- 5 On **1st November** we took part in a 'World Vegan Day' festival at the Indian Y.M.C.A. in Fitzroy Square. The event was organised by Jagdeesh Singh of London Sustainability 21. In my talk I said that vegans and vegetarians should be more assertive and take every opportunity to promote the cause!
- 6 On **16th November** we gave a talk at Westwood School, Norwood. There were around 45 students. We prepared rice and potato sabji while the students watched. They all enjoyed the food and were introduced to the vegetarian world!
- 7 On **28th November** I gave a talk to the Rotarians of Balham. The event was a great success. A special thanks to Ganshyambhai Patel for inviting me.
- 8 On **10th December** we had our annual Christmas Lunch. The event was jointly organised with the Wanza community of South London. Around 120 people thoroughly enjoyed the lunch. Malcom Wicks MP and Minister for Energy as well as Andrew Pelling MP were present. A Mahaveer Award was presented to Lorraine Chatfield of the Heathfield Ecology Centre. Lorraine's compassion is 'as deep as the ocean'.
- 9 On **2nd February 2007** I was a guest speaker at the AGM of the Heathfield Ecology Centre. I spoke about meat eating and the ecological and environmental damage to the planet.
- 10 On **7th February** we took part in a multi faith event at the All Saints Church in Kenley, Surrey.
- 11 On **19th April** we were invited again by Westwood School Norwood. Students watched as we prepared rice and mixed vegetable sabji. They became aware of the health as well as the ecological and environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet. They also realised that a huge amount of food that could feed humans is diverted to feed animals raised for meat.

- 12 On **26th April** I was invited to give a talk at the London School of Economics. The event was organised by the Hindu Society.
- 13 On **4th May** the Sivananda Yoga Centre in Putney had organised an evening of devotional music. We provided samosas to all those attending and they were a great hit!
- 14 On **27th May** I gave a talk at the Good Enough College, London. This was arranged as part of National Vegetarian Week. There are students from 92 countries living at the college. I urged the students to take the message of vegetarianism back to their countries.
- 15 On **6th June** we did an event with Kenley Methodist Church. We prepared a traditional Indian vegetarian meal for around 35 members of the congregation. Members of the Church enjoyed the food and were fascinated to hear about the philosophy of Ahimsa.
- 16 On **13th June** I was interviewed by DJ Nihal on the BBC Asian Network. This was a great opportunity to promote the vegetarian message to thousands!
- 17 On **16th June** the Quaker concern for animals held a multi faith meeting at Friends Meeting House on Euston Road. I spoke on the Jain concept of 'Abhay Daan' - giving all living beings protection from fear - fear of death.
- 18 On **21st June** I gave a talk at the Nehru Centre in London. I urged the audience to promote vegetarianism and Ahimsa at every opportunity.

More good news for veggies

According to a survey by Professors John Dickerson and Jill Davies from the University of Surrey, a meat eater is likely to visit the doctor twice as often as a vegetarian and is likely to suffer from degenerative disease 10 years earlier than a vegetarian. According to nutritionist Patrick Holford, 'from the viewpoint of optimum nutrition, a vegetarian diet has many more strengths than weaknesses'. 'It is very difficult to reach the ideal fibre intake unless one's diet is predominantly made up of lentils, beans, whole grains and vegetables. Vegetarians have faster gut transit times and considerably lower risks of digestive diseases including cancer. While a third of UK population has diverticula-pockets in the large intestine that become inflamed – there is half the incidence in vegetarians'. Vegetarians who avoid meat and fish have the second lowest risk of cardiovascular disease after vegans. They also have lower blood pressure. A vegetarian diet meets the recommendations for fat, protein and carbohydrate intake much better than the typical diet of a meat eater.



People Profile

Shabari Monica Saha

I am a young Indian vegan living in the UK. Being of Hindu Bengali origin where vegetarianism, let alone veganism, is frowned upon it does seem like an uphill struggle. What is needed is a shift in consciousness. I consider myself to be spiritual, rather than of a particular faith, and have a strong belief in karma. It was in my early 20s that I became vegetarian after being physically sick from eating meat and fish. It was a friend at university who brought home the connection between animals on the field and what was on my plate. My decision to become vegan came



soon after learning about the cruelty involved in the dairy industry. My body also began rejecting all animal products, therefore, I made the change at all levels – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. I have been vegan for about 10 years. I am passionate about seeing an end to animal cruelty, and as the Education Project Co-ordinator for the European Vegetarian Union I hope to encourage vegetarian and animal rights organizations to share their experiences and exchange ideas regarding school education in their country, which I feel is very important so that in the future we can live in a world that doesn't involve animal cruelty.

Contact: Shabari Monica Saha

Email: monica.saha@euroveg.eu



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Did You Know

- 1 That according to one study those who ate high amount of fish had a higher incidence of stroke. So much for healthy oily fish!
- 2 That a study of 459 adults with high blood pressure found that increasing the intake of vegetables and fruits lowered blood pressure.
- 3 That the greatest benefit of a diet rich in plant foods may be a high dietary intake of Vitamin C which has been found essential in preventing stroke.
- 4 That meditation and Yoga also help in preventing stroke.
- 5 That the 'Global Corruption Report 2006' estimates that the world spends more than 3 trillion dollars a year on health services.
- 6 That there are up to 400 million pus cells in every litre of milk.
- 7 That milk consumption could be responsible for heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer, prostate cancer, as well as osteoporosis, eczema, asthma, crohn's disease, colic, constipation and even teenage acne.
- 8 That imported beef from cattle fed with growth hormones can trigger breast cancer and other cancers and bring forward puberty in girls and increase the risk of genital abnormalities in boys.
- 9 That processed red meat products such as bacon, sausages and smoked ham can increase the risk of stomach cancer. Processed meat is often salted or smoked or have nitrates added to extend their shelf life. Processed meat also increases the risk of bowel and pancreatic cancer.
- 10 That bones of vegetarians and vegans are healthier because their diets are rich in phytoestrogens, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and vitamin K.
- 11 That according to a recent study there is a strong link, between red meat consumption and a lack of fruit and vegetables, to rheumatoid arthritis.
- 12 That grazing by animals and cultivation of animal fodder takes up 70% of all agricultural land - this is 30% of earth's total land surface.
- 13 That livestock are responsible for 18% of greenhouse gases – more than all the world's different forms of transport combined.
- 14 That according to environmentalist George Monibot, 'within as little as ten years, the world will be faced with a simple choice: arable farming either continues to feed world's animals or it continues to feed the world's people. It cannot do both'.
- 15 That one person following a meat free diet prevents more than 4000km of trees being destroyed each year.
- 16 That a vegan diet could reduce individual carbon footprints from food by 50 to 60%

JAIN ANIMAL SANCTUARY BURWASH, SUSSEX

Ray Barber, who for so many years looked after the animals sadly passed away on 25th March 2007. Sheila continues the work with absolute commitment and compassion. We continue sending £700 every month



A-Z Reasons to go meatfree



A is for Alzheimer's disease

Researchers University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) suggest that red meat could be linked to a build up of iron in brain causing the opposite effect of antioxidants - in effect the brain rusts. The researchers suggest it may explain why more men develop Alzheimer's as men eat more red meat than women.

A is for Arthritis

Eating red meat every day could double the risk of rheumatoid arthritis. Scientists believe that collagen found in red meat may trigger an immune system response which may also affect the joints.

B is for Bowel Cancer

A pan European study of nutrition and cancer found that people who ate more than two 80g portions of red meat a week were 30% more likely to develop bowel cancer than those who ate less than one portion. 80g is about the size of a pack of cards.

YIV Website

A big thank you to our webmaster Vaid Bharath for his continued good work on the site. We have had over 3500 hits since we launched www.youngindianvegetarians.co.uk

B is for Bones

Meat can have an adverse effect on bone health. The digestive process of protein leaves acid residues in the body that need to be neutralised with alkalisng minerals - and these may be taken from the bones leading to a higher risk of osteoporosis and other conditions. While green leafy vegetables are high in calcium, red meat has a low level and can cause excess acid to form, creating bone problems for future.

B is for Breast Cancer

A study from Harvard Medical School suggested that eating more than 100g of red meat a day could double the risk of a woman developing breast cancer. The risk was associated with young women who had not yet gone through the menopause. The study was among women in US where animals are given growth hormones that are banned in EU.

C is for Cholesterol

Red meat is one of the first foods that doctors advise patients to stop eating if they are at risk of heart disease because it contains high levels of dietary cholesterol.

F is for food poisoning

Beef, lamb and pork are the cause of one in six out breaks of food poisoning.

No Meat or Alcohol at Sikh Weddings!

Compassion prevails - everyone should follow this splendid example!

The Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, the city's top Sikh body, has told the capital's one million Sikhs to boycott weddings that are not teetotal, vegetarian and over by noon. Similar measures are being considered in other Indian cities.



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Geese are forced to ingest so much food that their livers swell up to 10 times their natural size

Natures Revenge?

Foie Gras is made from the swollen livers of force fed geese and ducks. This 'delicacy' could be linked to the onset of Alzheimer's disease, type 2 diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis especially to those who are prone to these diseases. The inhumane and cruel practice of force feeding birds should be made illegal everywhere.

Cholesterol Levelling Drug and Parkinson's disease.

Around 20 million C.L. lowering drugs costing £300 a patient were prescribed by the NHS in 2006. However research has shown a link between the drug and Parkinson's disease which affects around 120,000 people in UK. Experts at University of North Carolina found the link between Low-Density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels and Parkinson's. British Heart Foundation urged people to continue taking statins or they would be putting themselves at increased risk of heart attack or stroke. Red meat however is one of the first foods doctors advise patients to stop eating if they are at risk of heart attack. This is because red meat contains high levels of dietary cholesterol.

More reasons to give up milk

The milk most people drink is produced by cows for their calves. To ensure maximum milk yields cows are inseminated days after giving birth to their calves which are taken away. The dairy cow spends most of its life being milked and being pregnant at the same time. The worn out cow then is slaughtered and sold as pet food. Go Vegan!



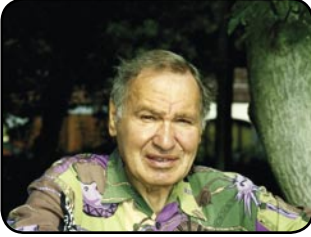
The relentless plunder of our oceans.

Government subsidies of more than £78 million were paid every year to maintain deep sea trawling vessels around the world. Deep-sea trawling involves dragging 15 tonne weights across the seabed to break up corals and rocks so fish can be scooped up. These vessels burn 1.1 billion litres of fuel annually. Fish that live more than 100 years and cold water coral reefs that have taken millennia to form are being destroyed by these vessels. The oceans are being permanently stripped of many unique life forms.



Obituaries

Peter Roberts



Peter Roberts MBE, founder of Compassion in World Farming, passed away on 15th November 2006. Peter was a true pioneer and visionary who exposed the utter cruelty inflicted on farm animals. Peter successfully got the E.U. to recognise animals as sentient beings and not just 'agricultural products'. CIWF continues to fight for the rights and welfare of animals not only in the UK but in many other countries too. Peter was a recipient of Mahaveer Award. We will always remember Peter with great pride and respect.

Michael Sutcliffe



Michael Sutcliffe, who was a well known animal rights activist, passed away on 6th April 2006 aged 83. Chairman of the Greek Animal Welfare fund for many years as well as chairman of Japanese Animal Welfare Society, he never failed to protest against vivisection, cruel farming practices, hunting with dogs and many other campaigns. Michael spoke at schools on behalf of Animal Aid and CIWF. Michael, along with Molga Salvaloggio, was a recipient of the Mahaveer Award. Michael was a vegan and the day before he passed away he had taken part in a central London protest against Canadian seal hunt. Michael's life should inspire all of us to do more for the cause of Ahimsa.

Narendrabhai Davadra



YIV lost a great friend and supporter in Narendrabhai Davadra who passed away on 28th December 2006. Narendrabhai accompanied me to YIV events all over the country and did all our IT work. He was a wonderful human being who enjoyed every minute of life and we miss him a lot. Narendrabhai liked food and we used to go to many restaurants to ensure that vegetarian standards in restaurants are not slipping! Narendrabhai was a wonderful human being who was generous both in mind and spirit.

Yashuben Amlani



Yashuben was a great supporter and guide of YIV for many years. She passed away on 7th April 2007. She was based in Bristol and organised many events to promote vegetarianism. She was an active social worker and received an MBE for her services to the community. She also wrote a Gujarati vegetarian recipe book which was very popular. We will remember her for the many campaigns we did together and for her advice and guidance.

Gelatin

Gelatin is an ingredient used in many food and non-food products which are not suitable for vegetarians. It is a substance that is derived from animal skin and bones, and most frequently derived from pig hide, cattle hide and bones and fish bladders (when it is named 'isinglass'). In this sense, gelatin is a disgusting and exploitative by-product of the meat industry. Gelatin is useful in the food industry because of its emulsifying, thickening, stabilising and elastic properties. Most commonly it is used in food to give it a unique 'melt in the mouth' and chewy flavour. Thankfully, pressure from vegetarians and certain religious groups has resulted in a dramatic increase in the use of vegetarian gelatin alternatives in recent years. However, the difficulty in finding a low-cost alternative has meant that it continues to be used in various everyday products and this means that we as vegetarians must remain informed and vigilant. Examples of common uses of gelatin are listed here:



Confectionary - marshmallows, chewy sweets, jelly, ice cream, jam and yoghurt.

Vitamins/Pills - the shells of capsules are often made from gelatin to make them easier to swallow. Always look for the vegetarian symbol when buying pills.

Photographic film and paper - is almost always made with gelatin to keep the silver halide crystals in emulsion.

Soft Drinks - Gelatin makes beta-carotene water soluble and thus is used in soft drinks when beta-carotene is needed to give the drink a yellow colour.

Cosmetics - Gelatin is used in cosmetics under the name 'hydrolysed collagen'.

Juice - Juices such as apple juice might use gelatin as a clarifier. Also used in this way for vinegar.

Alcohol - Isinglass (made from fish swim bladders) is used to refine many wines and beers. See The Vegan Society website for list of vegetarian/vegan alcoholic drinks. Vegetarians who drink alcohol should be aware that they are drinking something that is not vegetarian.

Glue - such as hide glue are unrefined gelatin.

Others - Gelatin is used as a binder in match heads and sandpaper and also to maintain the wrinkles in crepe paper.

Some vegetarians don't worry about things like gelatine out of ignorance - any animal ingredients must be avoided by a 'pukka' vegetarian!

Jyoti Mehta

Israel Berz

Israel and his wife were active members of the Croydon Vegetarian Society. It was Israel who introduced us to Sheila Barber, who runs the animal sanctuary we support. Sadly both Israel and his wife have passed away. We salute their compassion.

From The Press

The Independent asked its readers to suggest ways of stopping climate change and ecological disaster for the Government's green paper. The following was published in the paper on 28th. October

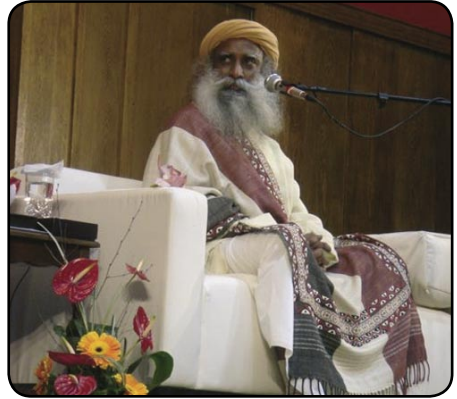
Sir: The Government should actively encourage people to give up meat eating in favour of a plant based vegetarian and vegan diet. A staggering 55 billion animals are raised for meat every year which in effect means 55 billion living beings who have to be fed and watered. This is in addition to the six and half billion human population which will rise to over nine billion by 2050. Our planet is simply not big enough to sustain these numbers. The result is destruction of rain forests, spreading of deserts and massive methane gas emissions leading to further global warming. To sustain a meat based diet we effectively need two planets which we do not have. It was Albert Einstein who said: 'Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances of survival of life on Earth as much as evolution to a vegetarian diet'

Nitin Mehta, Croydon.



(L-R): Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Nitin Mehta, Lord Swaraj Paul and Parsuram Prabhakar (food for all) at the awards

Mahaveer Awards



*Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev
Mahaveer Award Recipient 2007*

Presented to Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

Gurujee your razor sharp intellect and superb command of English language has brought the ancient wisdom of India to the world. Your concern for mother Earth and Vegetarian lifestyle will inspire people all over the world. We salute you.
Y.I.V., Conway Hall, London 29/1/2007

Presented to Lord Swaraj Paul

Lord Paul is the founder of Caparo group which is a multinational metal manufacturing group which has operations stretching from America to India. The company employs around 3710 people worldwide. The company is developing the Caparo T1 car which is expected to be amongst the fastest car ever made. Lord Paul's advice is sought by leading politicians. Lord Paul has achieved such fame and success without compromising his vegetarian credentials. Lord Paul is a living example that you do not have to give up your core values of compassion to succeed. Many Indians give up being vegetarian at the slightest challenge faced—let Lord Paul be an example to them!

YIV is grateful to the following organisations

- 1 Jain Samaj Leicester for their generous donation of £1000 to the Jain Animal Sanctuary. Our special thanks to President Kalpitbhai Doshi, Secretary Pankajbhai Shah past president Dr. Ramesh Mehta and all the committee members.
- 2 Navnat Vanik Association for the donation of £500 each from their, 'Jiv Daya' fund to YIV and Jain Animal Sanctuary. Our special thanks to president Subashbhai Bakhai, Rameshbhai Shah and all the committee members.
- 3 Oshwal Association, North West area for a donation of £501 from their 'Jiv Daya' fund to the Jain Animal Sanctuary. A special thanks to Pankajbhai Shah and all the committee members.
- 4 Surrey (Jain) Satsang Mandal for the donation of £1387.65 to the Jain Animal Sanctuary. Special thanks to Manjulaben Shah and all the committee members.
- 5 Arihant Charitable Trust, Manchester for the kind donation of £200 to the Jain Animal Sanctuary. Special thanks to the Mehta family.

Obituary



Lord Weatherill at the presentation of Mahaveer Award to Swami Ramdev in 2006

Lord Bernard Weatherill

Lord Bernard Weatherill, the former speaker of Parliament passed away on 6th May 2007. Lord Weatherill was MP for Croydon North East from 1964 to 1983. Lord Weatherill served in the Indian army during the Second World War - the famine in Bengal in 1942 greatly affected him and shaped his outlook to life. He became a vegetarian in India believing that meat consumption takes away grains from humans and that it was a diet which ravaged the planet and diverted food resources from human to animals. He said, ***'as a life long vegetarian I believe that since man cannot give life he has***

no moral right to take it away'. India also left a huge and lasting impression on him - he believed in the concept of Karma and reincarnation. He rose to the position of the speaker of Parliament from 1983 to 1992. Lord Weatherill always attended our annual Christmas lunch and told me many times that the event sent such a positive message of the Indian community playing a positive role in Croydon. On 22nd July 1990 we organised our first Vegetarian Rally in Hyde Park and Lord Weatherill and Tony Benn attended - the event was covered in almost every paper the next day and millions of vegetarians in UK were pleasantly surprised to know that they had two famous politicians who were vegetarians. On 17th June 2001 we presented a 'Mahaveer Award' to Lord Weatherill. He believed that it is crucial to keep a balance between material and spiritual values. He said that history reminds us that whenever that balance is overlooked disaster follows. It has been said that of the world's recorded civilisations virtually all have died not from enemy action, but from spiritual decay.

Picture Gallery

Right: Ladies ready to serve food at the Annual Christmas Lunch



Left: Dr. Janez Drnovšek, vegan President of the Republic of Slovenia: "Just think of all slaughter houses and production of beef or poultry where conditions for animals are impossible... When the final product is in front of them on the plate people don't think what was it before and how it got to this stage"



Above: Sharing food and friendship with the congregation of Kenley Methodist Church

Right: Sikh vegetarian martial arts group performing at the vegan fayre in Bristol





11th International Vegan Festival

(The First Indian Vegan Festival)

**At RNS Residency, Murdeshwar,
Karnataka, India.**

From Sep 30 to Oct 06 2007

The highlight of the IVF is a unique Peace March on Oct 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Web: www.ivu.org/veganfest/index.html or

Email: indianvegansociety@rediffmail.com.

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Udupi Dist, Karnataka, India

The World Vegetarian Congress

The first World Vegetarian Congress took place in Dresden a 100 years ago. A 100 years later, the "Vegetarier-Bund Deutschlands e.V." (VEBU) is organising the 38th IVU World Vegetarian Congress in Dresden from 27th July to 2nd August 2008 in the regional capital under the motto: "100 Years of Food Revolution"

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YIV INTERNATIONAL

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Vegetarian Society of Punjab

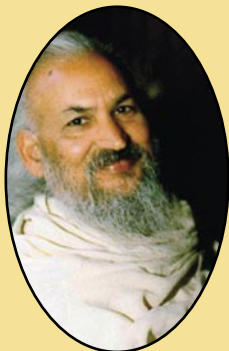
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Vegetarian Society of Andhra Pradesh

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No relations with meat eaters!

According to a survey conducted in New Zealand, vegans say having sexual relations with meat eaters would be, 'morally repugnant as well as ethically unacceptable'! Many vegan women consider the bodies of carnivores to be made up of animal carcasses!. These people are called, vegansexuals!! Most veggies and vegans are like that!



H.H. Acharya Sushil Kumar Ji Maharaj

June 15th 1926 - April 22nd 1994

Guruji Sushil Kumar Maharaj's Instructions

Promote tree planting throughout India
Promote vegetarianism and save the animal wealth
of India from going to slaughterhouses
Organise, unite & fight for ahimsa

Vitamin K is given to all new born babies. Vitamin K has bovine bile. This is huge problem to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and millions of vegetarians and vegans. The following article was published in the Pharmaceutical Journal (circulation around 45 thousand). Here is an opportunity for vegetarian pharmacists to help! Any offers?

People have a right to know if their medicines contain animal ingredients

By **Nitin Mehta**, founder of the Young Indian Vegetarians group

Recently, the presence of rennet, a product from calves' stomachs, in confectionery was highlighted when vegetarians pressured Masterfoods into reversing its decision to use it in Mars Bars. The use of animal ingredients in medicines is far less talked about but it is a major problem for the five million people in the UK who avoid some or all animal products for reasons of faith, ethics or allergy. With the advent of legislation such as the Equality Act 2006 there is mounting concern that the ethical, spiritual and dietary needs of these groups should be properly recognised and addressed in respect of all goods and services, including those offered by the pharmaceutical and medical sectors. The Act will see the establishment of The Equality Commission in October, but the Department of Health is ahead of the game — it has already appointed a director of equality and human rights, Surinder Sharma, to ensure that it meets the requirements of the new legislation. This is particularly important considering that many medical goods and services are of necessity and are provided when the receiver is at his or her most vulnerable.

Vitamin K injection is a prime example. The injection, which is routinely administered to newborn babies to prevent haemorrhagic disease of the newborn, used to be free of ingredients derived from animals but the formula was recently changed to include a substance derived from bovine bile, making it unsuitable for Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, vegetarians and vegans, to name but a few. Neither the change in composition nor the availability of any alternative was properly publicised and, as a result, many babies have been, and continue to be, injected with cow products without their parents' knowledge or consent. A plant-based alternative is available on a named patient basis but most health care staff seem to be unaware of this. (Admittedly, this product is currently supplied in a gelatine capsule, but the manufacturer has expressed willingness to change this.)

Gelatine is commonly encountered in medicines. Derived from animal collagen (mainly porcine and bovine), it is used in the preparation of pastes, pastilles, suppositories and capsule shells, immediately rendering these products unacceptable to many vegetarians. An intravenous infusion is also used as a

plasma volume expander. In addition, some over-the-counter aspirin and antacid preparations contain lactose or non-plant stearates, used to enhance the production of the tablets. Often this is only mentioned in the small print on the leaflet within the packaging and some people find themselves unwittingly consuming substances that they would find unacceptable. Moreover, many pharmacists are unable to identify reliably which products do not include these ingredients. For equality and respect for the rights of others to be increased there needs to be change from the bottom up. Pharmacists and other health care workers need to be aware that some substances may be unacceptable to certain people, and they need to be well informed about which products contain these substances and if there are any alternatives.

In addition, the pharmaceutical industry must highlight the presence of all animal ingredients as clearly as is required of the food industry. For example, medicines could be labelled "suitable for vegetarians". This would remove the need for people to read every ingredient in a medicine and to work out if it is of animal origin. "The Vegetarian Society would welcome any initiative that facilitates the choice of vegetarian patients and customers. The society urges the medical profession to take into account vegetarians' beliefs as far as is practicable when prescribing medicines," said Chris Olivant, information manager at the Vegetarian Society.

There is a great deal to be done. After two years of knocking on doors in the pharmaceutical industry, a breakthrough came when Mr Sharma hosted a meeting between various stakeholders, including Hindu and Jain representatives and members of the procurement and pharmaceutical sectors of the health service. The meeting, in March, identified the enormous scale of the problem facing thousands of patients and health care workers every day, and the need for better information at every point in the chain between producer and consumer, including consultations with a health care professional and the dispensing and sale of medicines. As well as informing patients and customers, pharmacists could play a crucial role in informing procurers and other health care professionals.

A further meeting, held in May, was attended by representatives from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and drug companies, like Wyeth Research. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Inform and highlight the issue of medicines containing animal products to the pharmaceutical industry
- Hear the pharmaceutical industry's views and concerns about producing viable animal-free medicines
- See how the NHS can produce a best practice policy to inform vegetarian and vegan patients about the contents of medicines and of alternatives available

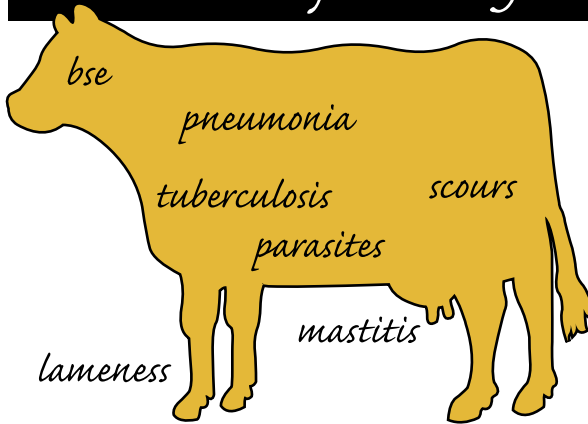
Industry representatives were concerned about the cost factors involved but also highlighted that substituting an animal ingredient could alter the potency of a formulation. However, as a result of the meeting, Richard Barker, director general of the ABPI, promised to highlight the issue at all levels of the industry. It was also agreed that pharmacists have a key role to play in helping industry to understand and meet the needs of patients in our modern, multicultural world. Mr Sharma undertook to look into producing a good practice guide for all hospitals.

Good relationships between pharmacists, consumers and health care staff are of paramount importance in giving information about ingredients that might be unacceptable to particular individuals and what the alternatives are. Equally important is a reliable flow of accurate information from the industry to pharmacists, pointing out any changes in formulation and any ingredients that may pose a problem. On a wider scale, the medical establishment, as well as the NHS, must take the cultural, religious and dietary practices of clients into account when prescribing medicines, in the same way that these are taken into account when food is provided in hospitals. Of course, in terms of medicines, there may not always be alternatives to offer, but it is a matter of ensuring that patients have the necessary information to give informed consent to taking a medicine.

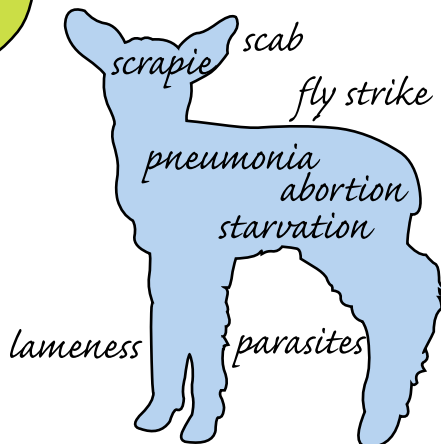
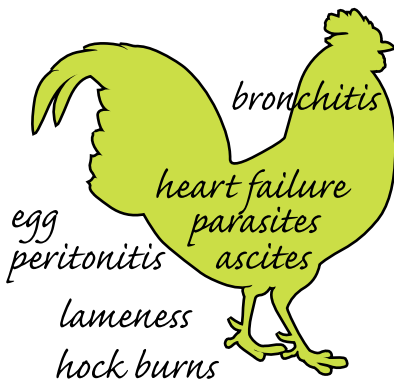
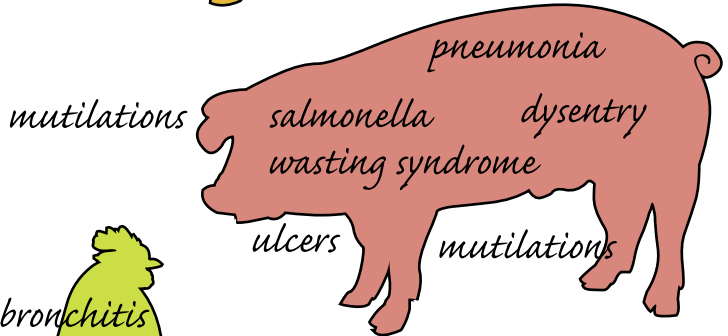
With co-operation and goodwill solutions can be found and put into practice. I hope that everyone involved in producing, purchasing, prescribing, supplying and administering medicines will take on board our concerns and that a code of good practice can be put in place as soon as possible.

Some people find themselves unwittingly consuming substances that they would find unacceptable

Diseases Animals suffer from even before slaughter



**It is ironic that we
humans scream
with pain if we have
a pin prick, yet we
fail to feel the pain
of animals**



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