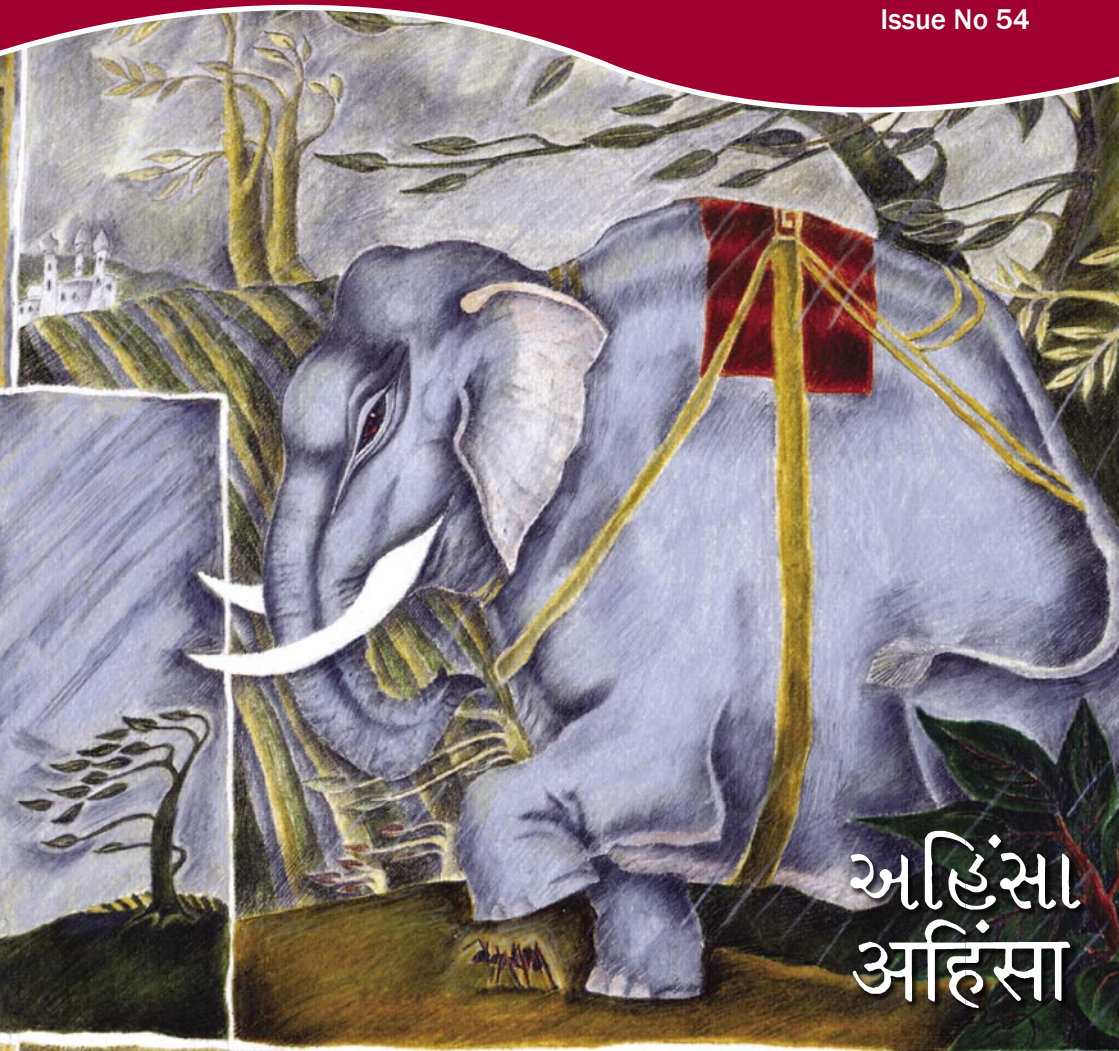




Ahimsa

now in our 33rd year

Newsletter of the
Young Indian Vegetarians
Summer 2011
Issue No 54



અહિંસા
अहिंसा

Compassion for the weak and defenceless

Above: An Elephant sheltering ants from a storm



Dear Friends

Welcome to another issue of Ahimsa. Evidence is mounting that meat production is damaging our planet and we are heading towards a catastrophe. Along with the ecological damage being inflicted on the planet the amount of grains being fed to animals and biofuel production is pushing millions of people towards starvation. According to Oxfam, one in seven people go hungry every day and by 2050 we will be unable to feed ourselves. To further add to the problem commodity trading firms are buying or tipping large quantities of grains as a way of making quick profits. This will further add to food inflation. In countries like Uganda and Nigeria families spend almost 50% of their income on food and further price increases will push them to hunger. Yet the rising middle classes of China and India are eating more pork, poultry, beef and fish. It takes 3kg of grain and 16,000 litres of water to create 1kg of meat. It seems mankind has lost the plot. We are living for the minute without a thought for future generations. Precious rain forests continue to be destroyed, the rivers and oceans are being plundered and the billions of animals raised for meat cause global warming, destroy fertile land and pollute the waterways. Against this backdrop each one of us has to do whatever we can to stop this madness. There will be victories and defeats but we have to continue without losing heart. Here are a few victories and setbacks as well as inspiring stories:

Victories

- 1 In spite of its best effort to block it MPs voted overwhelmingly to ban animals from performing in circuses. Born Free Foundation, Animal Defenders and Animal Aid came together to bring this about. The Independent played a crucial role in collecting a petition of 30,000 people. The decision by MPs is not binding on Government, but the representative Minister on this issue in the House of Commons, Jim Paice, indicated that the Government would consider their position in the light of the vote.
- 2 After intense lobbying by many individuals and organisations like Compassion in World Farming and WSPA, Nocton Dairies withdrew their plans for mega dairies. Around 3,770 cows would have been kept indoors most of their lives causing them great suffering. For its active role in this campaign Compassion in World Farming was awarded 'Campaigner of the Year' at the 2011 Observer Ethical Awards.

The Young Indian Vegetarians

Nitin Mehta, 226 London Road, West Croydon, Surrey, England CR0 2TF

Tel: (044) 020 8681 8884 | **Fax:** (044) 020 8681 7143

email: animalahimsa@yahoo.co.uk | **Website:** www.youngindianvegetarians.co.uk

Communicate! Please acknowledge receipt of this newsletter by emailing us. Do you have a story you think our readers might be interested in? We would like to hear from you. Please write to us or email us with anything which you feel may be of interest.

- 3 Battery cages are due to be outlawed across the European Union from January 2012. For millions of hens kept in barren battery cages across the EU it will mean a reduction of immense suffering for these birds.
- 4 The South Africa Pork Producer's Organisation has agreed to phase out the use of cruel sow stalls. There are currently 100,000 breeding sows in S. Africa who give birth to around 40,000 young pigs that are reared for slaughter every week in the country. A special thanks to Compassion in World Farming for bringing about these changes.

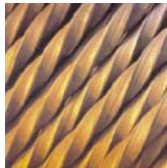
Setbacks

Live exports from the UK have resumed. Sheep, pigs and unweaned cows are being sent on horrendously long journeys to Spain.

And the brave hearts

Animal Defenders International rescued 25 lions, 6 monkeys, a coati mundi, a deer and a horse from circuses in Bolivia. Bolivia banned animal performances from circuses after ADI officers first exposed cruelty to circus animals in the country six years ago. Operation Lion Ark relocated the lions to a sanctuary in Colorado USA on 16th Feb 2011. The sheer audacity to rescue these animals from a foreign country and overcome the logistic nightmare of transporting them is stupendous. Well done ADI. Contact ADI and give your support: info@ad-international.org.

Nitin Mehta



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Congratulations & Best Wishes to
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for 33 Years of campaigning

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DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 That United States grows more corn for livestock and cars (biofuel) than humans.
- 2 That to feed people and livestock the world will need to produce an additional 1 billion tonnes of cereals annually in the next decade. This is a 50% increase which will be impossible to achieve due to soil degradation, over use of agrichemicals and climate change.
- 3 That increasing meat production has been identified as the main cause of worsening water scarcity in China. Water use for livestock production globally is projected to increase by 50%.
- 4 That an additional 2 million kilometres of land will be needed for food production by 2030. Over exploitation of arable land and soil damage is causing the loss of millions of hectares of once productive crop land.
- 5 That by 2050 oil and gas production may halve. Intensive agriculture is based on cheap fuel with two thirds of agriculture's energy costs used for fertilisers and agrichemicals. Cutting meat by 50% and milk consumption by 40% in developed countries would make a contribution to halving energy use in the food system.
- 6 That farming accounts for around 70% of all freshwater taken from lakes, waterways and underground water supplies much of it to produce meat. It takes around 1000-2000 litres of water to produce a kilo of wheat and somewhere between 13,000 litres and 100,000 litres for a kilo of meat.
- 7 That the production of 1kg of beef requires 15 times as much land as the production of 1kg of cereals and 70 times as much land as the production of 1kg. of vegetables.
- 8 That over a third of all cereals grown in the world is used to feed animals rather than people. That it takes 20kg of cereal and soya feeds to produce 1 kg. of edible chicken.
- 9 That a pound of potatoes takes around 99% less water to produce than a pound of meat.
- 10 That up to 2 million sea birds have died in the last 10 years as a result of fishing in waters around Europe and the Atlantic.
- 11 That blueberries can boost memory and may help to ward off dementia. A recent study also showed that people who regularly ate blueberries or strawberries had significantly reduced risk of developing high blood pressure.
- 12 That diet cola which is sugar free could be responsible for stroke and heart attack. This is because artificial sweeteners such as aspartame are used in sugar free cola drinks and they could be causing damaging effects.

The following people pledged to go vegetarian at the various events we held during the year:

Priyanka Palimar (Birmingham).
Hetal Parmar, gave up eggs, (Loughborough).
Gigi Graepp (SW16).
Francoise (gave up fish).
Disha Hegde (Milton Keynes).
Prerna Kapoor, gave up fish (Berkshire).
Angela Kay (St. Albans.).
Christopher Morton (St. Albans).
Mita Patel (Birmingham).
Sagar Lakhanpal (Derby).
Yudheswar Teelock (Croydon).
R.P. Amin (Aylesbury)



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Namaste & Welcome

Shayona Caterers (Previously known as Saya Caterers) is the number one choice for Authentic Indian Vegetarian Cuisine. Over the years, Shayona has developed a reputation for its innovative and outstanding food, unique and authentic themes and professionalism. Shayona has maintained the flexibility and level of personal service, which it prides itself on. The evocative aromas and flavours of their personalised hand manufactured cuisine, have entertained thousands of guests at venues all over the country.

Mouthwatering Menus

Shayona Caterers presents an extensive innovative menu, drawn from various regions of India, especially the western state of Gujarat. If you require a dish that is not listed on our menu, please do enquire and we will be happy to accommodate your requirements. We cater for clients with specific dietary requirements (abstaining from onions and garlic) and can adapt our recipes to your individual taste and preferences.

Contact Us

If you have any queries about our catering services or would like to book an appointment to discuss your requirements, please don't hesitate to contact us using any of the methods below

Our helpful staff will be delighted to answer all your queries and work with you to give your special event that perfect flavour!

*Shayona Caterers (Previously known as Saya Caterers)
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*Abbey Industrial Estate
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Alperton, Middx. HA0 1NR*

*Phone: 0208 900 0314
Fax: 0208 900 2058
Email: admin@shayonaid.co.uk
Contact: Chandrakant Patel*

My vegetarian experiences in 8 countries:

Nishma Kothari

After graduating from university, I decided to backpack around India and South East Asia with a friend. I have always been a strict vegetarian and was determined not to let this change through my travels, no matter the circumstances. Our first destination was India - the home of cheap tasty vegetarian food... the country where carnivores wouldn't miss meat. The variety and flavours are enough to satisfy anyone's hunger. I enjoyed street food the most, even though this sometimes took its toll on my stomach! We spent around 3 months in this vast beautiful country, travelling from south to north.

Sri Lanka was my second destination. The food is similar to India and easy for vegetarians, and traditional meals consist of the rice, curry and coconut sambhar. Thailand was my second favourite country for vegetarian food after India. Every morning fresh orange juice and a range of juicy mouth watering fruits such as mango, papaya, and pineapple and so on, are easily available. There is always tasty fresh vegetarian food available. In Cambodia and Laos, due to the French influence, most restaurants served fresh bread, coffee and western food which gives vegetarians lots of choice. In Vietnam and China due to the difference in the culture, I struggled with explaining the term vegetarian let alone finding any vegetarian food. Most dishes had chicken stock; it was very hard to find pure vegetarian food, there were times when I simply didn't eat, but this never bothered me. Our final destination was Nepal. We trekked through the Himalayas to reach Everest Base Camp, and the food that sustained us was Tibetan cuisine, such as Momo's which are vegetarian dumplings. After 6 amazing months I'm back home



From L-R: Nishma, Suzie and Mona

and confident that where ever I travel in the world, I will never compromise my veggie principles.

Live Beautifully

Founder of Matt and Nat Vegan Accessories, Inder Bedi, has often told the story of how he built a handbag empire on compassion. The 37-year-old founder of Matt & Nat vegan accessories was asked at age 18 by a Hare Krishna priest to go vegetarian for 30 days: "And it changed my whole life," he says. Almost 20 years later, Bedi's Via Vegan company is thriving. His faux leather bags, belts and wallets under the Matt & Nat label are sold in Canada, the U.S., U.K., Italy, Germany, France and many other places. Bedi was in the news recently when a former employee complained that the company violated her rights as a non-vegetarian by banning meat and fish on company premises. When asked what prompted him to start this business, Bedi said "...I wanted to prove to myself, and to the world that we could do beautiful products and still stand for our principles".





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International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

Customs officials at Kuala Lumpur airport in Malaysia intercepted 411 critically endangered tortoises which were stolen from Madagascar. They were destined for China. IFAW funded their return to Madagascar. They have been taken to Ifaty Turtle Village, where they will be rehabilitated and monitored for 12 months. They will then be released into a National Park with other tortoises. We are proud to support IFAW. They campaign to stop Canadian seal hunt, and rescue elephants, rhinos, bears and other animals. Contact: www.ifaw.org

Vegetarian Society of Kenya Revived! - 2014 World Vegetarian Congress in Kenya?

We formed the Vegetarian Society of Kenya in 1991 and under the chairmanship of Kaushik Kothary it was active for many years. Over the last few years the society had not been so active. On my visit to Kenya a meeting was held in Nairobi on 17th October 2011 to revive the society. The venue was Hindu Union Hall. Under the chairmanship of Satwinder Singh Sian and assisted by Liladharbhai Bharadia, Mayuri Shah and committee members the society is back in action!

The first East and Central Africa Vegetarian Congress was organised in Nairobi on 17th and 18th December, 2010. It was the third Vegetarian Congress in Africa and the first outside West Africa. International Vegetarian Union, regional coordinator for Africa, Emmanuel Eyoh who hails from Nigeria oversaw the smooth running of the two day event. Emmanuel likes to take out a procession through the city and distribute food to the poor at all congresses held in Africa. In Kenya too the same pattern was followed with great success. Prominent Kenyan politician Dr Julia Ojumba was present at the congress. John Davis of the IVU was also present. The Hare Krishna Food for Life, the Hare Krishna temple Nairobi, Brahma Kumaris and the Anand Marga society all supported the congress. Plans are afoot to organise the first world vegetarian congress in Africa in 2014. And the country is Kenya!



Emmanuel Eyoh with some of the younger participants in Nairobi

...and some of the older ones



Kenyan Vegan Feast in Croydon



Jyoti Mehta invited a few of us North Londoners for an evening of Kenyan food on 28th April. For starters we had muhogo (cassava) drizzled with a dressing made with chilli powder, salt, and lemon juice. It wasn't barbeque weather so Jyoti's mum boiled the muhogo and grilled it. It took me back to the cliff tops overlooking the Indian Ocean in Mombasa, famously known as Lighthouse. Lighthouse is a meeting point for friends and family. Here you can buy roasted corn on the cob and muhogo and take in the cool fresh sea breeze.

For the main meal we had Irio (corn, kidney beans and potatoes), Githeri (corn and kidney beans), Dengu (dried pigeon peas in coconut milk), Ugali (corn meal), Sukuma Wiki (Spring greens) and Mahamri (deep fried sweet bread). Each dish was made using few ingredients and it tasted amazing. The flavours of the vegetables complimented each other really well and there wasn't any need to add spices for flavour. A few words in Swahili were exchanged. And for dessert there was vegan Lemon Drizzle cake – the perfect finale to a joyous and nostalgic evening. Thank you Jyoti's mum, Pratibhaben, for the lovingly prepared wonderful vegan Kenyan feast for us all.

Nishma M. Shah

Do's and Don'ts

- A Do persuade others to give up meat.
- B Do speak the word 'vegetarian' at every opportunity.
- C Go only to vegetarian restaurants.
- D Don't wear or buy leather goods, (sofas shoes etc.).

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Hindus, Jains and Milk consumption



Milk and milk products play an immensely important role in Indian culture and way of life. Lord Krishna's love for milk, yoghurt and butter are legendary. However, as far as I am aware, there is no record of cheese being made in Krishna's time and the reason is obvious: Cheese is a food product of the West and to produce it rennet is needed. The active ingredient of rennet is the enzyme, 'chymosin'. The usual source of rennet is the stomach of slaughtered newly born calves. Adult cows do not have this enzyme and it is therefore derived from the abomasums [fourth stomach] of newly born calves.

It is possible to make vegetarian cheese by using the rennet from either fungal or bacterial sources but traditionally cheese has been produced using animal rennet. The vegetarian rennet as we know today is produced by genetically engineered bacteria yeasts [fungi]. The process of producing the vegetarian rennet may start with animal rennet but infinity of replications in yeast cells reduces the content of the animal rennet to a vanishing level. Alternatively, the chymosin encoding DNA [genetic material] can be biosynthesised in the laboratory without the use of calf cells and used in the production of vegetarian cheese. The fact remains that in the initial production of the vegetarian cheese calf cells would have been used.

Another issue of importance is that in the making of cheese or any other milk products

one has to come face to face with a cow and her pitiable condition. The modern dairy cow suffers enormously and the dairy and the beef/veal industry are all interconnected. Today's cows are impregnated artificially and forced to have a calf every year. The modern cow is inseminated when she is around fourteen months old and gives birth to her first calf at two years. In a healthy environment cows would live in excess of 25 years but modern dairy cows are slaughtered within 4 to 5 years. The female calf is cruelly separated from the mother and a male calf is either killed straight away or sold as veal meat. Selective breeding and concentrated feeds have resulted in dairy cows giving ten times more milk than before and this has pushed the cow beyond her natural limits and brought about many diseases. Most dairy cows suffer from mastitis. Mastitis is a painful infection of the udder and has to be treated with antibiotics. Traces of blood as well as legally permitted pus and blood cells may be found in milk sold for human consumption.

When the dairy cow cannot give any milk or produce any calves she is slaughtered and ends up as baby food. During Lord Krishna's time the cow was worshipped and showered with love and affection and in return she provided enough milk for its calf as well as for human beings. The milk that we get today comes from a cow whose suffering is immense. On moral grounds alone milk, like meat that comes from the suffering and torture of the animal, cannot be good for one who partakes of it. The violent vibes of these foods would have an impact on the consumer. According to a survey around 30% of consumers are trying to avoid dairy products: one reason being the allergic reactions that people get. Lactose intolerance is also a major reason for people avoiding dairy products. In many Indian families a glass of milk is drunk before going to sleep. A big mistake! Grown up humans beings do not need milk.

Either we go back to the time when cows were treated with utter care and compassion in return for their milk or we go vegan.

Having said all this I acknowledge the fact that cheese has become a very important and popular food for us today, not least because we have been introduced to Italian pizza! One problem with cheese is that though it is a good source of protein, calcium, zinc and vitamin B12 it is also a major source of saturated fat, which can lead to raised serum cholesterol levels and so should be eaten in moderation. The increasing reliance on pizza, pasta and fries to keep children happy will not do their future health any good. Vegan cheese made from soya milk is available in supermarkets and health food shops. Some of the names of popular brands of vegan cheeses are: Vegerella, Cheezly, Scheeze and Swedish Soft. As for milk, go for soya milk or rice milk and once you get used to it you will wonder why you ever took milk! In religious ceremonies where milk is traditionally used it should be replaced with soya milk! Butter can be replaced with dairy free vegetable spread and paneer can be substituted with tofu easily! Vegan yoghurt is made easily by adding acidophilus.

From Krishna's time to the present time we have come to know of many new types of food and we will continue to learn of new foods from different cultures and there is nothing wrong with that. The only condition being that it should be vegetarian or preferably vegan! *These new foods should have a second place in our diet, the first being the food that has sustained us since the time of Rama and Krishna; fruits, vegetables, rice, daal and chapattis! Our culture and religion will live as long as we do not abandon our vegetarian life style, which is based on the lofty ideal of Ahimsa towards all living beings.*

Nitin Mehta



The UK's First Vegetarian Internet TV Station

After years of waiting for technology to catch up - presenter, mum and VeggieVision TV founder Karin Ridgers is ecstatic to launch the new web TV station and technology in partnership with Life on Show TV.



Despite humble beginnings VeggieVision TV has already attracted viewers and contributors from all over the world.

Watch the channels

www.veggievision.tv/Vegetarian-TV-Portal.asp

VeggieVision Home: www.veggieivion.tv



H.H. Acharya Sushil Kumar Ji Maharaj
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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

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg Questioned!



On 27th August the deputy Prime Minister did a question & answer session with a select audience. I had the privilege to ask the first question. The question: *"Mahatma Gandhi said 'the moral well being of a nation and its greatness should be judged by the way it treats its animals'. The time has come to form a charter of animal rights so that their abuse in blood sports, factory farming and vivisection can be stopped. The government also needs to promote a plant based vegetarian diet to help stop global warming and improve the health of the nation. Can the animals count on your government's support, Mr. Clegg?"*

The deputy PM replied: "We are a nation of animal lovers and the government wants to do as much as possible for animal welfare. Banning of experiments on animals for cosmetics is one of our achievements as a country. The reaction of the public to the recent dumping of a cat in the bin shows how passionately people feel about animal welfare in this country".

Though the answer was not very positive, the question was shown on BBC TV and in an interview on LBC radio the question was brought up again. Nick repeated that he was aware of the immense concern amongst the public about animal welfare. Nick referred to the question as one of the good ones!

Desmond Tutu World Statesman: In the Garden of Eden everyone was Vegetarian!



Desmond Tutu came to Croydon Fairfield Halls on Thursday 5th August for a meeting with the public. He was interviewed by Trevor McDonald. This was followed by questions from the audience. I made sure Trevor asked me to put a question! This is what I asked: *"Thanks to great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and you Sir, some of the cruelties and injustices perpetrated by human beings to their fellow humans have ceased. The time has now come for humans to stop the violence and abuse we inflict on the animal kingdom. Can the animals count on your support Mr. Tutu? Gandhi strongly believed that animals need to be treated with compassion and dignity. Can you help the cause of animals and go vegetarian also?"*

Desmond Tutu laughed his infectious laugh and said he liked eating chicken! He then said, *"In the Garden of Eden everyone was vegetarian but we have slipped"*. He agreed that all humans and animals should be treated with compassion and no one should be harmed. But he said, "I am not going vegetarian!" There were over a thousand people at the meeting and I was glad to put across the cause of animals!

Y.I.V. is grateful to the following organisations

- 1 Shree Jain Sangh, East London & Essex for the donation of £1180.00. Our thanks to Hansaben Bakhai and all the committee members.
- 1 Oshwal Association of UK South, Satsang Mandal for the donation of £1,300. A special thanks to all the members for their generous support.
- 2 Shravan Month Bhajan group for the donation of £121. Thank you Bhartiben Doshi and all the members.
- 3 Jain Samaj Manchester for the donation of £500 from their 'Jiv Daya' fund. Special thanks to president- Piyushbhai Mehta, treasurer Chandrakantbhai Makim and all the committee members.
- 4 Jain Samaj Leicester for a donation of £1000. Our thanks to president Smitaben Shah, treasurer Pankajbhai Shah and all the committee members.
- 5 Jain Pragati Mandal for the donation of £ 250. A special thanks to Ramanbhai Shah and all the committee members.
- 6 Jain Association of UK for the donation of £246. Thank you Jivan Jain and all the committee members for your continued support

Bishops in England and Wales reintroduce meatless Fridays

Catholics in England and Wales will be obliged to abstain from meat every Friday under a new rule brought by the bishops. The "Act of Common Witness" will take effect from Sept. 16th 2011, the first anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Britain.

The rule, announced at a news conference in London in mid-May, reverses a relaxation of the Friday penance regulations introduced in England and Wales in 1984. This allowed Catholics to choose their own form of Friday penance — such as offering additional prayers, attending Mass or abstaining from alcohol.

But critics have said that the end of a tradition in which Catholics ate fish or eggs instead of meat on Fridays led to a loss of common identity, with many Catholics today abstaining from meat only on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

The return to an obligation to abstain from meat was a key resolution of the bishops' May plenary meeting held in Leeds, England, May 9-16.

Animal Sanctuary in the city of Rajkot, Gujarat, India

Rajkot Mahajan's Panjrapole was established in year 1986. Since then, it has been actively working for welfare of all animals. Currently they have nearly 4000 large animals and nearly 800 small animals and birds. Their main activity includes taking care of orphan animals, operating and taking lifetime care of injured birds and animals. They fight cases in court to save animals from being sent to slaughter houses. Their current daily expense is nearly ₹80-90K. In return for bringing an animal to the sanctuary instead of sending it to a slaughter house they give money to the owner of the animal! I visited the sanctuary on 16th May 2011 and donated ₹25,500 in the memory of my late brother Kiritbhai Mehta.

The following successful events took place since the last newsletter

- 1 On 11th July 2010, I met Swami Ramdev at a function held in Harrow. I urged Swamiji to continue the promotion of vegetarianism to the millions of people who come in contact with him. I also requested him to look into the cruelty involved in milk production.
- 2 On the same day I gave a talk at the Mahaveer Jayanti celebrations held by all the Jain organisations in London. I urged Jains to lead by example in the practice of Ahimsa - non violence towards all life forms at our mercy.
- 3 On 5th September we kept a stall at the annual Janmastmi festival held at the Hare Krishna temple in Watford. 6 people took a pledge to go vegetarian.
- 4 On 18th September we kept a stall at the Croydon Ecology Centre on their annual day.
- 5 On 2nd October a massive animal rights rally took place in London. Amongst the speakers addressing the rally were Andrew Tyler of Animal Aid and Juliet Gellertley of Viva! I too addresses the rally and said that a world free of animal cruelty is a goal that we will strive for forever. Our efforts are not in vain. Future generations will take inspiration from our campaigns and fulfill our dream
- 6 On 31st October we kept a stall at the mega Diwali event at Trafalgar Square. 7 people took a pledge to go vegetarian.
- 7 On 10th November I gave a talk to the Harrow Humanists. Humanists do not believe in God but promote good causes. A lively discussion took place. I was told they had not had such an interesting talk for a long time!
- 8 On 20th November we travelled to Nottingham. The National Hindu Students Forum had a conference at Trent University. We kept a stall and one individual took a pledge to give up meat, another gave up eggs. One student pledged to go vegetarian for 3 months!
- 9 On 5th December I was interviewed by a French television company about the Hindu perspective of Ahimsa and vegetarianism.
- 10 On 12th December we had our 30th annual Christmas lunch! Around 120 people enjoyed the vegan menu. The deputy Mayor Susane Winborne graced the occasion with her presence. She said she too was a vegetarian and for once she will enjoy the food without worrying about the ingredients! Croydon North MP Malcolm Wicks and Margret Wicks were present too.
- 11 On 1st. February 2011 I took part in a debate on vegetarianism on BBC Asian Network.
- 12 On 18th March I gave talk to the Chandana Vidya Peeth Jain classes at Kingsbury School, Kingsbury. The subject was: Practicing Ahimsa.
- 13 On 23rd. March I gave a talk to the City vegetarians known as Vegetarian Interest Group.
- 14 On 12th April I was a guest on Venus TV.
- 15 On 16th April I was invited to give talk at the newly opened Hindu temple in Cardiff. A special thanks Harishbhai and Vimlaben Patel and all the family members for their kind hospitality.
- 16 On 3rd July we kept a stall at the Hare Krishna festival in Croydon.

Jain Animal Sanctuary

Sheila Barber continues to look after the animals at the sanctuary in Burwash, Sussex. We continue sending £700 each month.

Vijay Shah a vegetarian on top of the world

(first Jain vegetarian to explore the artic)

I have just returned with two team mates from a polar expedition on Baffin Island, Arctic Canada where we became the first British team to cross the remote Penny Ice Cap. The project covered skiing over 250km on skis, starting and ending at sea level but rising to almost 2000m at it's highest point. Through the eighteen day expedition, we endured air temperatures of below -25C, blizzards, 70kmph winds and polar bears. At times the challenging Arctic environment also meant that we had to ski and drag our 50kg pulks over extremely thin ice, the dangers of which were highlighted when my team mate Duncan Eadie fell straight through the ice into the ocean below.

How does a vegetarian survive in the Arctic? If one was to live on the natural food found there the simple truth is one cannot. It's a case of that except for blueberries in the summer time, no edible plants grow there. The growing season is very short and for much of the year the ground is frozen and below several feet of snow.

Being a vegetarian polar explorer is something quite unheard of. The Inuit are quite bemused to hear about someone surviving without eating meat and even my fellow western team mates find it odd. The diet for a polar expedition is one of fat and protein of approximately 3500-5000K calories a day – classic animal produce territory. Weight is also crucial and we go to extremes to limit the amount of weight we carry. So how does a vegetarian explorer survive in a place with no edible plant life?

The answer is we take all our food with

us. This is normal and not restricted to my vegetarian diet. We use specifically designed dehydrated rations to provide our main meals. Lunch and snacks are made up of items that have a high protein, fat and with lots of complex carbohydrates as well simple sugars for energy boosts. For a vegetarian this was made up mainly of nuts, cheese and dried fruit, (note that only dried apricots and figs do not freeze solid at -25C). Our dehydrated rations are provided by specialist expedition ration food companies but the menus are normally meat based to cater for the western diet.

Thankfully there are a couple of companies that have a wide range of vegetarian dehydrated meals available and these days are all very tasty! These are Be-well expeditions food and Kudrati Naturally of which links can be found below.

Links: www.vijayshah.net/blog
<http://www.bewellexpeditionfoods.com/>
<http://www.kudrati.com/>



A letter to a Chicken eater!

A chicken born in a natural environment would live for seven years. It would perch, walk, run and stretch its wings. These days a chicken would have been born from broiler breeders (special stock of chickens). Broiler breeders are slaughtered at around 10 months old when their peak egg production is past. Surplus chicks (known as 'hatchery waste') are minced alive, gassed or their necks are dislocated. A chicken raised for meat would be put in a shed with up to 20 to 50,000 other birds. It would have an area the size of an A4 paper to stand on. It would gain weight rapidly resulting in being unable to walk. Many are severely crippled with arthritis. Many more die of thirst and starvation as they are unable to reach food and water.

Some 100,000 birds die every day in UK broiler sheds as a result of heart failure and other diseases. The birds are surrounded by their own waste. This causes the inflammation of the skin over the hock. (Hocks are the joint in the hind legs). Hock burn is extremely painful and can often be seen on chickens sold in the supermarkets. Chickens like humans are sensitive to ammonia. This can result in painful eye condition leading to blindness.

Bird Flu or Avian influenza is also common. It is a highly contagious viral disease affecting the respiratory, digestive and nervous system of the birds. Chickens are slaughtered at just 6 to 7 weeks of age. They are held upside down by their legs and crammed into crates to be taken to a slaughterhouse. Many chickens die in this process of catching and transporting. At the slaughter house they are hung upside down

on a moving line. Their heads and neck are dragged through an electrically charged water bath designed to stun the birds, rendering them unconscious. Their necks are then cut by an automated neck cutter. They are then bled and put into a scalding tank to make the plucking of feathers easier.

Almost 50 million chickens across the European Union may be slaughtered while fully conscious. In 2009, 800 million broiler chickens were killed for meat. There are 15.4 billion chickens at any given time, that is twice as many chickens as humans who eat them!

So if you do not eat other meat except chickens please give it up!



The Vegetarian Society is the oldest vegetarian organisation in the world. Join other vegetarians across the UK to help us promote the vegetarian message!

We are an educational charity promoting understanding and respect for vegetarians but we need your support to help us with our essential work, to make it easier for people across the UK to follow a vegetarian lifestyle.

Visit www.vegsoc.org/members or call **0161 925 2000** to find out more about our charitable work and to find out about the great benefits of joining the Vegetarian Society!

Join today and receive 25% off your annual membership by simply quoting 'YIV11' online or over the phone.

Registered charity number 259358

A letter to an Egg eater!

All egg production systems involve the disposal of unwanted male chicks as they are of no use to the industry. Around 30 million chicks are destroyed annually. They are minced alive, gassed, suffocated or their necks are broken. Battery cages are arranged in rows of 3-6 tiers inside huge windowless sheds. Artificial lighting is kept on for around 17 hours a day to help increase production.

Unable to fulfil their basic behavioural needs such as wing flapping, dust bathing, scratching, pecking, perching and nest building, they resort to aggressive acts such as feather pecking and cannibalism. To prevent this hens have their beaks trimmed or de-beaked. This is extremely painful. Due to the demand for calcium required to produce eggs, hens suffer from brittle bones. Broken bones, infectious bronchitis, cage

layer fatigue, leukosis and egg peritonitis are some of the other miseries faced by egg laying hens. Almost 35% of hens die in the cages due to bone fragility, known as cage layer osteoporosis. Hens also suffer from Avian Coccidiosis. It is a parasite that develops inside cells lining the intestine and they cause bleeding and massive swelling of the gut. Many hens die of this disease. Hens are also infected with salmonella and campylobacter. Salmonella can cause severe food poisoning in humans following consumption of contaminated eggs. After they are unable to lay any more eggs the hens are killed at the age of one year. Almost 27 million hens were killed in England and Wales in 2006. They are killed in much the same fashion as broiler chickens.

Whoever said eggs were kosher for vegetarians? Any one for an omlette?

Keeping Parrots - not a cool idea!

Parrots are wild animals and retain wild instincts whether born in captivity or not. Captive parrots need to exercise, fly and play. They need to eat a wide variety of foods. Parrots may live up to 80 years. The skilful and dedicated supervision that parrots need means that caring for a parrot is like caring for a toddler, but for the rest of your life! Some parrot diseases can pose a serious threat to humans.

Psittacosis, commonly known as parrot fever is just one of the numerous diseases that people can catch from captive birds. Symptoms of Psittacosis in humans are similar to flu and the disease is potentially lethal to children under five, pregnant women, the elderly and anyone who is immuno-compromised.

*Contact: Animal Protection Agency.
We are proud to support APA.
E-mail : info@apa.org.uk*





Factory Farming and its Damaging Impact on the Planet

Livestock production is responsible for 37% of global methane emissions, 65% of global nitrous oxide emissions and 9% of global carbon dioxide emissions. 64% of ammonia emissions come from animals and it contributes to air, soil and water pollution, acid rain and damage to ozone layer. Intensive farming is impacting biodiversity in a big way too. As land is cleared for farming wildlife habitats are lost too.

Many species are disappearing and a further global warming of 2 degrees could result in the extinction of up to 15 - 40% of land species. An eventual rise of 3 degrees or more, which is now thought likely, could see the extinction of up to half of all land species. A rise in sea level of one metre is possible by the end of this century. 150-200 million people could be permanently displaced due to rising sea levels. The billions of tonnes of animal waste pollutes our rivers and oceans. Around 30% of the nitrogen that pollutes water in the EU and US is due to livestock (72% in China). Nitrogen pollution is caused by both animal manure and the use of excessive quantities of fertilisers to produce animal feed. Two hundred dairy cows can produce

as much manure as a town of 10,000 people. Livestock production additionally pollutes freshwater by sediments (through soil erosion), pesticides, antibiotics, heavy metals and pathogens such as salmonella.

Factory farms are also sources of aerial pollutants that can damage the health of workers and those living near them. A chicken shed holding 100,000 broiler meat birds can emit up to 77 kg. of polluting dust per day.

It has been estimated that half of all antibiotics produced in the world are used for food animals for preventing diseases. Human beings have become resistant to these antibiotics due to consuming meat with antibiotics! The deadly BSE disease, avian bird flu and swine flu are all a result of intensive farming. Meat production is projected to double by 2050. An extra 120 billion animals would be needed to meet this demand. Our planet is simply not big enough to sustain these numbers. The planet is already on the brink of collapse. Meat and dairy production is a recipe for disaster – give up both!

(Information courtesy: Global Warming: Climate Change and Farm Animal Welfare-A report by Compassion in World Farming)

Vegetarian Interest Group

VIG is dynamic group of City professionals promoting a vegetarian lifestyle. The group operates from the Accenture premises in Fenchurch St. and is led by Vinay Gulati. He brings along over 20 years of organisation, communication and planning experience, working with several Fortune 500 companies, and uses it to drive his passion for vegetarianism. Trained by Al Gore as a volunteer for the Climate Project, he also sits on the board of several professional bodies active in the City, helping them in structuring and implementing their thoughts around environmental and global climate agendas. Since last year, he has joined hands with several other corporate organisations to spread awareness around diet and sustainability.

In its third year of operation now, the group has broken many traditional vegetarian stereotypes. VIG provides environmental, musical, spiritual and emotional dimensions to its cause, thus taking a holistic approach to a rather disciplinarian routine. The group aims to raise awareness on lifestyle options and their impact on health and environment. And it's not just preaching, but educating, practicing and adopting such holistic lifestyle which lends VIG a pragmatic appeal. No wonder that there isn't even a requirement on the members to follow vegetarianism, veganism, pescatarianism or any other eating regime!

Amongst its flagship events, VIG counts Brown Bag as the leading one. These are lunch time events that are very popular because the members do not devote a separate timeslot to attend them and they are organised within the company premises. Such professionalism and convenience

resolves the queries that most employees usually seek before participating in voluntary projects. Under this umbrella, the members have enjoyed quiz sessions, live piano music and group discussion around human consciousness. Reaching out to broader dimensions, the group has organised an evening talk on emotional intelligence, by bestselling author and executive development specialist Mike George. VIG also hosted Davina Lloyd to speak on the relationship between food and mood. More recently, the group screened a short documentary on vegetarian lifestyle followed with a talk by animal rights activist Nitin Mehta. Appreciation of diversity in thoughts and practices was an underlying common thread amongst all these events. Looking ahead, the group is organising a panel discussion to bring forward the various reasons why people opt for vegetarian practices. Other future events are planned around the themes of sustainability, media and medicine.

Contact: info@proveg.org. AnkitGandhi

YIV Website

(www.youngindianvegetarians.co.uk)

A big thank you to our webmaster Vaid Bharath for his continued good work on the site. We have had over 12,000 hits since we launched. Please visit the website and sign our pledges.

Ahimsa Award

The institute of Jainology is to confer this years Ahimsa award to Nitin. Amongst the previous recipients of this award is Nelson Mandela. Congratulations Nitin from all at YIV.

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From the press:

(Letter Published in the Independent - 2nd Feb 2011)

There are two things that human beings can do to avoid the nightmare of hunger. Almost 65 billion animals are raised for meat every year and the grain fed to them can feed almost 4 billion people. Instead of eating grains and vegetables we are feeding them to animals and then eating the animals. The destruction of rainforests in south America, the spread of deserts and the pollution of rivers and oceans are due to our desire for meat.

In 2007 almost 27 million hectares of land was used to produce biofuel and in 2008 food prices soared, pushing almost 100 million people below the poverty line. If meat and biofuel production stopped we might avert a tragedy of biblical proportions.

Nitin Mehta

Letter published in the Saturday Guardian Magazine on 9th April 2011

Bill McKibben is right that floods, earthquakes, landslides and other "natural" disasters are due to the plunder of this planet by humans. For our survival we need to respect all nature's creation and all life forms, from a small insect to an elephant. We need to start now!

Nitin Mehta

Letter published in Independent - 20th June 2011

The dramatic growth of antibiotics in farm animals poses a serious threat to human health. The real problem is the massive growth in demand for meat. The only way to meet this is through factory farming, a system based on selective breeding for high yield, overcrowding and gross restriction of animals' natural

behaviour.

The only way to take the pressure off animals is to drastically reduce meat consumption. Grains being used to produce biofuel and almost 40 per cent of cereals going to feed animals is pushing millions of people towards starvation. The global-warming impact of methane emissions from farm animals is well-documented too. There is one solution to all these problems and that is to revert to a vegetarian or vegan diet. Those who cannot take this step straightaway can start by giving up meat a few days a week.

Nitin Mehta



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Vegetarian Society of Kenya, revival meeting in Nairobi. 17th October 2010

Picture Gallery



Sita Ram group in Nairobi serves a hot vegetarian meal every Sunday to around 1,200 people. In Mombasa too a Jain group runs a similar project every Sunday. A senior citizen receives the food - 17th. October 2010

Prayers at the Cardiff Hindu Temple after a talk on Vegetarianism. 16th April 2011



*21st May 2011
With Meenaben Amin (middle). Meenaben is the founder of the Pashu Seva Kendra (Animal Sanctuary in Baroda, India)*



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