

Vanik Voice



LIVE AND HELP TO LIVE

Issue 40 - March 2010

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How you can contact or find out more about the NCVA

www.vaniks.co.uk

www.ncva.co.uk

VanikVoice@googlemail.com

This committee was elected on 01
November 2010

Chairman

Mr. Manharlal L. Mehta
37 Howberry Road
Edgware
Middlesex
HA8 6SS
Tel: 020 8952 1165

E-mail:
chairman@ncva.co.uk

Regional Vice Chairmen

North:
Piyush Mehta

Midlands:
Gajendra Chhatrisha

London:
Dhiru Galani

South:
Harkishan Mehta

General Secretary

Paresh Gandhi
secretary@ncva.co.uk

Joint Secretary

Ramesh Shah

Editor

Mrs. Heena R. Modi
vanikvoice@vaniks.co.uk

Treasurer

Avanti Jasani
treasurer@ncva.co.uk

Executive Committee Members

Bharat Parekh
Bina Holden
Jyotsna Patel
Dr Natubhai Shah
Raksha Shah
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Smita Shah
Vijay Sheth

Co-opted Members

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Nitin Parekh

What carbon footprint?

We started to look at our carbon footprint several years ago, before it became fashionable. We had always felt that we were reasonably energy efficient, so we worked out how much energy the business produced over a year and then calculated the carbon footprint that this gave.

We produce and distribute around 120 tonnes of vegetables every year direct from the farm. Our system of production utilising stockfree methods, growing all of our own plants (over 140,000 pa) ensures that we are operating as near as possible to a closed system. This means that we do not have to import fertility and plants produced on other farms. This reduces energy inputs quite considerably.

Our total energy usage for the year is mostly in the form of fuel for tractors, delivery vehicles and other machinery. This comes to 2030 litres, around 5 litres per family that we supply for the whole year. Electricity is used to light buildings, provide some facilities for plant raising and other odd jobs. We use 6400 units per year, about the same as the average household.

The total carbon footprint for our business comes to around 8 tonnes, which is the same as an average house in the UK. We have a very low carbon footprint. Compared with supermarket conventional produce, we are 90% more efficient.*

If you are interested in reading more about our energy use and the possibilities for the future, read my article here - <http://www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk/articles.cfm>

*As verified by Prof. Tim Jackson, BBC Climate Change special programme March 2007

Source - <http://www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk/about - carbon footprint.cfm>

The NCVA Matrimonial Register

The NCVA have a professional, anonymous structure in place to help you meet your possible soul mate.

Jayman Mehta is the person to contact if you wish to register for this service.

Once you register, you will receive a list of other people who are looking for a partner. The list is organised so that the reader can learn the height, qualifications, age and reference number of each member. Viewers can see whether the members on the list are male or female by looking at the letter at the beginning of the reference number. However, they cannot see the name of any other details that will identify those on the list.

For further information please contact: - Jayman Mehta

Contact time: Mon. to Fri. evening between 5.30 p.m. & 7.30 p.m. ONLY, on Tel. no. 020 8907 2428

Please DO NOT contact outside above days and time

You can also receive this list by e-mailing mehtajayman@yahoo.co.uk or manhar_mehta@hotmail.com

**Groups affiliated to the
NCVA**

Aden Vanik Association
UK

Digamber Jain Visa

Mevada Association UK

Jain Association of UK

Jain Samaj Europe

Jain Samaj Manchester

Jain Sangh Birmingham

Jain Sangh of Europe

Mahavir Foundation

Navnat Vanik Association
UK

Navnat Youth Association

Oshwal Association of UK

Shree Jain Sangh East
London & Essex

Shree Navyug Jain Pragati
Mandal,

Shree Sidhpuria Vanik
Samaj

Shrimali Soni Mandal
London

Vanik Association UK

Vanik Samaj Leicester

Vanik Samaj Coventry

Vanik Samaj of UK
Brighton

Vanik Samaj
Southampton

Veerayatan UK

Young Jains

**Groups Established by
NCVA**

Vanik Professional Group
Vanik Business Group



The Healing Mind
Q&A with Dadi Janki

*“I make a point of creating thoughts and feelings of happiness,
peace and benevolence, which make me feel better – not worse.”*

How can I not worry when my body is unwell?

Our response to pain can cause as much distress as the pain itself – so we need to learn how to use our minds to help, not hinder, our recovery. I have spent many years both as a nurse and a patient, and have seen how silence works alongside science in the healing process.

I can use the power of my mind to step back from what is happening in my body. By observing what is happening, instead of being caught up in it, I free myself from negative thoughts and feelings. I make a point of creating thoughts and feelings of happiness, peace and benevolence, which make me feel better – not worse.

It is important not to suppress what is in my heart, as this can impede healing. Let me listen to my heart with love and honesty. Honesty gives me spiritual power to deal with the situations I have to face. But I must be careful not to take on sorrow, for that weakens me. If I keep having pure, positive thoughts and good wishes for myself and for others, then I will be cared for, I will receive power and my mind will become strong and in this way I will help the body to heal.

Dadi Janki is Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris. She is also President of the Janki Foundation for Global Health Care, a UK-based charity that researches and promotes a values-based model of modern health care, offering improved understanding in response to suffering and encouraging the development of positive thoughts and attitudes. www.jankifoundation.org

First published in The Inner Wave, the newsletter of Brahma Kumaris UK
www/bkwsu.org/uk/newsletter

Badminton for fun

If you are interested in playing badminton for free and in a non competitive environment please read on....

Badminton for fun is just that - it's a ton of fun! You don't need to have any experience, or even a partner, you just need to turn up on the day and play. The sessions are open to people who live, work or study in harrow and is a result of playsport london- getting people more active before the olympics!

Ladies only and mixed sessions are being offered free of charge at harrow leisure centre for six weeks only.

No booking required but for more information please call 020 8966 1059 or email getactive@harrowpct.nhs.uk

Ladies only: Tuesdays at 6-7pm | February 23 | March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

mixed sessions: Thursdays at 10-11am | February 25 | March 4, 11, 18, 25 | April 1

Venue: Harrow Leisure Centre, Christchurch Gardens, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 5BD

Kind regards

Laura Simmonds

www.harrowpct.nhs.uk

A different take on varakh

Dear friends,

Normally I do not get involved in such controversial discussions, primarily because I do not have firsthand knowledge of what is being said.

I have two observations to make:

Rather than discussing the method of manufacturing the foils, has anybody checked the contents of the foils?

Silver is very expensive today. I wonder if any of the foils are made from pure silver. Considering the price, it is most likely aluminium or such other metal.

So, without arguing about how it is made, one should consider not eating it under all circumstances/not using it in temples as well.

Secondly, I have seen manufacturers of rolling machines on the internet who sell machines for manufacturing foils.

This means that not all foils are made in the unhealthy and non-vegetarian style, using animal intestines. See below ~ there are many others.

<http://www.ameekesar.com/gold-vark.htm>

Again, since I have never seen the manufacturing process myself, I am unable to comment, but one should not apply a single view to ALL.

This is called EKANTVAD in Jainism and it is never true.

I would like someone to conduct a research and find out the reality on this subject. This will eliminate a lot of debate and doubt in the minds of the people. Is anyone able to take the challenge?

With Khamat Khamana to all concerned,

Harshad Sanghrajka

The article which Harshad responded to: -

India Sweets - SILVER FOILS ARE NOT VEGETARIAN

The silver foils are not very expensive. They are sold by weight. Ordinarily, you can buy a packet of 160 foils for a price between Rs.100 to 200. That is, approximately one rupee per foil. Not only the sweets, now a days it is also applied on fruits. Some Ayurvedic medicines also are wrapped in silver foils.

They are made by hammering thin sheets of silver in middle of booklets made of a bull's intestines. In other words, after slaughtering a bull, quickly his intestines are removed, and sold to the manufacturers of foils. The skins made of old intestines are of no use. Even one-day-old intestines can not be used, because within a few hours they stiffen.

The foil manufacturer removes blood and stools from the intestines, and cuts them into pieces.. Then he puts one piece over another, making a booklet out of it. At his home, or in the factory, he puts one silver (or gold) sheet in-between each page. Then he hammers it hard until those metal sheets turn into thin wafers.

The intestines of bulls are so strong, that even repeated hammering do not destroy them, or they do not let the foils move around inside. Because of the hammering, some tissues of the intestine mix with the foils. After that the foil manufacturer sells the bundle of foils to the sweets manufacturers.

Some small foil manufacturers sell the foils to the temples.

This foil is not only dirty, it also is non-vegetarian. Even the meat-eaters do not eat intestines. Use of these foils turn even sweets into non-vegetarian food. A few years ago the Indian Airlines learned about this, and since then stopped using them on the sweets served in their planes.

Source of Silver Foil in Sweets

Indian Airlines, the domestic air-carrier of India had issued instructions to its suppliers to supply sweet without silver foil called VARAKH. Do you know why? Silver is widely used for various purposes in the market today.

Silver is considered precious and its utility is enormous. The reason behind this is that silver reflects back 95% of the light energy that falls on it. The silver foils used for edible purposes is called VARAKH So what's so special about VARAKH? If you keenly observe this VARAKH under a microscope don be perturbed if you happen to see traces of blood, stools and saliva of a cattle or ox.

VARAKH is a silver foil and we have no second questions on this, but to prepare this VARAKH important parts of the CATTLE/OX is made use of.

Continued below

India Sweets - SILVER FOILS ARE NOT VEGETARIAN continued

Intestines of Cattle/OX are obtained from the slaughterhouse. This is obtained after butchering to death the cattle/ox for beef and the part, which cannot be consumed: the intestines are pulled out of the animal and handed over to the manufacturers of VARAKH. Before handing over the intestines, they are washed in the slaughterhouse to get rid of the blood and other remains on these intestines in the limited facility that is present in the slaughterhouse. We are not sure how neatly this job is carried out. Intestines are cut into small pieces and then are bound together as pages in a notebook.

A silver block is placed in the middle of these bound intestines, and the whole thing is placed in a leather bag and sealed. Experts, who know how to make VARAKH, pound the bag with wooden sticks, till the entire bag flattens out. The silver block would by this time be turned into silver foil. This Silver foil would now be separated from the intestine pack and will be placed on paper.

This is VARAKH, which reaches the market ready for use. Even staunch vegetarians, who shy away from egg, unknowingly consume this as a part of sweet, pan and arecanut. Some unknowingly consume this because of the additional taste that VARAKH provides. Now the question is "Why the intestines of the cattle/ox? Why not something else?" The reason behind using the intestines of the cattle/ox for preparing the VARAKH is because of the elasticity of the intestines.

They do not get cut even after a severe pounding.

This aspect is brought out in the magazine "Beauty without cruelty" and the Television show of Maneka Gandhi, "Heads and Tails". In India, on an average an estimate indicates that 2,75,000 kilos of "VARAKH" is consumed. Can you estimate how many cattle/ox are sacrificed for just a bit of taste? If you are surprised as I am, after reading this article please inform as many as possible so as to ensure that we unknowingly don't consume beef.

Pan

By now, a pan-lover vegetarian person may have eaten equivalent of many miles of oxen intestines!

For them, here is another bad news - the Chuna that they apply on pan, also is not vegetarian!

That is made from the shells of living insects. These insects are taken from the ocean, killed, and removed from the shell. Then the shells are softened in water, dried, and ground into white powder.

When you put this Chuna in your mouth, you are participating in killing of many insects. This is no different from taking life of a goat or a pig. Everyone wants to live, no one likes the pain of death.

Indian Sweets and Varakh

Silver foil, or varakh, as it is generally known in India, adds glitter to Indian sweets, betel nut (Supari), Paan (betel-leaf), and fruits. It is also used in Ayurvedic medicines. The silver-topped sweet is even served as prashad in many temples and on auspicious and religious occasions. Varakh is also used in flavoured syrups as in Kesar (saffron) syrup.

If one observes Varakh under a microscope one will find traces of blood, stools and saliva of a cattle or an ox. Varakh is not derived from an animal source. However, a crucial material of animal origin, ox-gut, is used in its manufacture. This ox-gut is obtained from the slaughterhouse.

The intestine (ox-gut), smeared with blood and mucus, is pulled out from the slaughtered animal by the butcher at the slaughterhouse, and sold for the specific purpose. This is then taken away to be cleaned and used in the manufacture of Varakh.

The gut of an average cow, measuring 540 inches in length and 3 inches in diameter, is cut open into a piece measuring 540" x 10".

From this, strips of 9" x 10" are cut to give approximately 60 pieces of ox-gut, which are then piled on top of each other and bound to form a book of 171 leaves.

Next, small thin strips of silver are placed between the sheets and the book slipped into a leather pouch. These bundles are hammered continuously for a day to produce extremely thin foils of silver of 3" x 5".

The leather and ox-gut, being supple, can withstand the intense manual hammering for up to 8 hours a day. The leather is beaten to the desired thickness. When ready, the foil is carefully lifted from between the leaves of ox-sheets of paper to be sold to the sweet shops. A booklet of 160 foils weighs approximately 10 grams and To make a single booklet of 171 sheets, the guts of 3 cows are used. And the yield per book is generally : which may be damaged or unfit for use. Thus one book, used on an average of 300 days of the year yields of silver which means that each ox-gut yields an estimated 16,000 foils.



The leather used for the pouch to hold the book (made from ox-gut), is cowhide or calf leather, and uses about 232 sq. inches of material. Assuming the size of an average cowhide to be 18 sq. ft or 2,600 sq. Inches, the yield per hide will be approximately 10 leather pouches.

Usually 4 foils are used per kilograms of sweets and the ox-gut of one cow is used to produce foil for approximately 4,000 kilograms of sweets. It is estimated that the average consumption of sweets by a middle class family of four in India is about 100 kilograms per year.

Thus, an average middle class Indian family of four consuming approximately 100 kg of sweets per year for forty years consumes silver foil produced with the gut of 3 cows and one-tenth of a cowhide!

In India 275 tons of silver is transformed into Varakh that utilises the intestines of 516,000 cows and calf leather of 17,200 animals each year.



Ayambil Oli

We are proud to announce that Jain Vegans is sponsoring the forthcoming Ayambil Oli, taking place from 22nd March to 30th March inclusive at:

Oshwal Centre (Coopers lane Road, Hertfordshire. EN6 4DG.UK)

(See below for details of how you can get involved)

What is the significance of Ayambil?

Ayambil Oli is a festival in honour (aradhana) of nine pads[nine points of harmonised energy]. It is a physical austerity or tapa of semi-fasting (ekasan), to control the sense of taste for nine days. It can be observed on any day and practised singly. In an Ayambil one requires to conquer one's taste buds by eating food devoid of taste (bitter - kharu, sour - khatu, sweet - mithu and spicy - tikhu). No seasonings or spices like chilli powder are added to food. Also one has to refrain from ghee, oil, salt, sugar, dairy products, molasses, fruits and vegetables.

As you can tell from the above description, the food that one consumes as part of Ayambil is vegan, albeit with additional restrictions. Ayambil is therefore particularly special for vegan Jains because during the nine days of Ayambil, thousands of other Jains also observe a vegan Jain diet. (Note: Ayambil food is a very austere form of a vegan Jain diet and one shouldn't think that adopting a vegan diet means eating only Ayambil food all year round).

Jain Vegans members will be pleased to note that for the first time in the 23-year history of this event at the Oshwal Centre, many of the ingredients used will be organic, and the rice will be fairtrade as well as organic.

Furthermore, all the food served to volunteers during the festival will be vegan. Normally volunteers helping at the event are served a lacto-vegetarian Jain meal.

How to get involved in the forthcoming Ayambil event?

- 1) You are welcome to participate in the actual Ayambil fast, during which you would eat the one special Ayambil meal on the days of your fast (1 to 9 days – your personal choice). You would simply need to be at the centre by 12pm, seated in the dining hall, and your food will be served to you by volunteers.
- 2) Volunteers are needed to help serve the special meals to the Ayambil participants on each of the days from 22nd March to 30th March inclusive. Volunteers are asked to be present at least between 1130am and 1.30pm on each of the Ayambil days, and a vegan Jain lunch will be provided at no cost.

If you are interested, in volunteering, please contact Minal Shah by emailing him at: Minal@JainVegans.org

Please provide Minal with the following information:

- your name
- your telephone number
- which day or days you'll be attending.

The weekend – 27th and 28th March – will be particularly busy, so more help will be needed on those days.

This is a special moment in the short history of Jain Vegans, and we're very proud and looking forward to having the vegan message spread among the UK Jain community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask via this forum or email the Jain Vegans team privately at:

Ayambil@JainVegans.org

With warm wishes,

The Jain Vegans Team.

(Chandan Shah, Jonathan Grey, Jyoti Mehta, Ketan Varia, Keval Shah, Kewal Shah, Mahersh Shah, Minal Shah, Nishma Shah, Roshni Gudka, Sagar K. Shah, Saurabh Dalal)

The late Devendrabhai Virchand Shah (1945 – 2008) (www.devendrabhai.com)

The beloved Devendrabhai, a valued friend of Jain Vegans, was the inspiration behind Jain Vegans sponsoring the March 2010 Ayambil event. In 2008, he warmly invited all Jain Vegans members to experience the Ayambil event at Oshwal Centre. For those who made it, they were treated to a special informative guided tour, by Devendrabhai himself, of the various Ayambil activities taking place at the Oshwal Centre, before sitting down in the dining hall for the Ayambil meal.

The March 2008 Ayambil was a very important one for Devendrabhai, as this marked his completion of fasting nine consecutive Navpad ni Oli (i.e. 81 Ayambils).

To learn more about this extraordinary and much loved Jain, including the vegan dimension which was a major part, please visit the special tribute website set up by Drijen, his son: www.devendrabhai.com

Why Indians are stressed and unhealthy

Manmohan Singh had his arteries bypassed on Saturday, a procedure that increasing numbers of Indians are having. Last year, medical journal Lancet reported a study of 20,000 Indian patients and found that 60 per cent of the world's heart disease patients are in India, which has 15 per cent of the world's population.

This number is surprising because reports of obesity and heart disease focus on fat Americans and their food. What could account for Indians being so susceptible -- more even than burger-and-fries-eating Americans?

Four things: diet, culture, stress and lack of fitness.

There is no doctrinal prescription for vegetarianism in Hindu diet, and some texts explicitly sanction the eating of meat. But vegetarianism has become dogma.

Indian food is assumed to be strongly vegetarian, but it is actually lacking in vegetables. Our diet is centred around wheat, in the north, and rice, in the south. The second most important element is daal in its various forms. By weight, vegetables are not consumed much. You could have an entire South Indian vegetarian meal without encountering a vegetable. The most important vegetable is the starchy aloo. Greens are not cooked flash-fried in the healthy manner of the Chinese, but boiled or fried till much of the nutrient value is killed.

Gujaratis and Punjabis are the two Indian communities most susceptible to heart disease. Their vulnerability is recent. Both have a large peasant population -- Patels and Jats -- who in the last few decades have moved from an agrarian life to an urban one. They have retained their diet and if anything made it richer, but their bodies do not work as much. This transition from a physical life to a sedentary one has made them vulnerable..

Gujaratis lead the toll for diabetes as well, and the dietary aspect of this is really the fallout of the state's economic success. Unlike most Indian states, Gujarat has a rich and developed urban culture because of the mercantile nature of its society. Gujaratis have been living in cities for centuries.

His prosperity has given the Gujarati surplus money and, importantly, surplus time. These in turn have led to snacky foods, some deep fried, some steamed and some, uniquely in India, baked with yeast. Most Indians are familiar with the Gujarati family on holiday, pulling out vast quantities of snacks the moment the train pushes off.

Gujarati peasant food -- bajra (millet) roti, a lightly cooked green, garlic and red chilli chutney, and buttermilk -- is actually supremely healthy. But the peasant Patel has succumbed to the food of the 'higher' trader and now prefers the oily and the sweet.

Marathi peasant food is similar, but not as wholesome with a thick and pasty porridge called zunka replacing the green.

Bombay's junk food was invented in the 19th century to service Gujarati traders leaving Fort's business district late in the evening after a long day. Pao bhaji, mashed leftover vegetables in a tomato gravy served with shallow-fried buns of bread, was one such invention.

The most popular snack in Bombay is vada pao, which has a batter-fried potato ball stuck in a bun. The bun -- yeast bread -- is not native to India and gets its name pao from the Portuguese who brought it in the 16th century. Bal Thackeray encouraged Bombay's unemployed Marathi boys to set up vada pao stalls in the 60s, which they did and still do.

The travelling chef and TV star Anthony Bourdain called vada pao the best Indian thing he had ever eaten, but it is heart attack food..

Though Jains are a very small part (one per cent or thereabouts) of the Gujarati population, such is their cultural dominance through trade that many South Bombay restaurants have a 'Jain' option on the menu. This is food without garlic and ginger. Since they are both tubers (as also are potatoes), Jains do not eat them, because in uprooting them from the soil, living organisms may be killed (no religious restriction on butter and cheese, however!).

Even in Bombay, this intolerance prevails. Domino's, the famous pizza chain, has a vegetarian-only pizza outlet on Malabar Hill (Jinnah's neighbourhood). Foreigners like Indian food, and it is very popular in England, but they find our sweets too sweet. This taste for excess sugar extends also to beverage: Maulana Azad called Indian tea 'liquid halwa'. Only in the last decade have cafes begun offering sugar on the side, as diabetes has spread..

India's culture encourages swift consumption. There is no conversation at meal-time, as there is in Europe. Because there are no courses, the eating is relentless. You can be seated, served and be finished eating at a Gujarati or Marathi or South Indian thali restaurant in 15 minutes. It is eating in the manner of animals: for pure nourishment.

We eat with fingers, as opposed to knives and forks, or chopsticks, resulting in the scooping up of bigger mouthfuls. Because the nature of the food does not allow for leisurely eating, Indians do not have a drink with their meals. We drink before and then stagger to the table.

As is the case in societies of scarcity, rich food is considered good -- and ghee is a sacred word in all Indian languages. There is no escape from fat. In India, advertising for healthy eating also shows food deep fried, but in lower-cholesterol oil.

The insistence by family - 'thoda aur le lo' -- at the table is part of our culture of hospitality, as is the offering of tea and perhaps also a snack to visiting guests and strangers. Middle class Indians, even families that earn Rs10,000 a month, will have servants. Work that the European and American does, the Indian does not want to do: cooking, cleaning, washing up.

Painting the house, changing tyres, tinkering in the garage, moving things around, getting a cup of tea at the office, these are

Continued below

Why Indians are stressed and unhealthy continued

things the Indian gets someone else to do for him.. There is no sense of private space and the constant presence of the servant is accepted.

Gandhi's value to India was not on his political side, but through his religious and cultural reforms. What Gandhi attempted to drill into Indians through living a life of action was a change in our culture of lethargy and dependence. Gandhi stressed physical self-sufficiency, and even cleaned his toilet out himself.

But he wasn't successful in making us change, and most Indians will not associate Gandhi with physical self-sufficiency though that was his principal message. Indian men do no work around the house. Middle class women do little, especially after childbirth. Many cook, but the cutting and cleaning is done by the servant. Slim in their teens, they turn thick-waisted in their 20s, within a few years of marriage.

Since we are dependent on other people, we have less control over events. The Indian is under stress and is anxious. This is bad for his health. He must be on constant guard against the world, which takes advantage of him: the servant's perfidy, encroachment by his neighbours, cars cutting in front of him in traffic, the vendor's rate that must be haggled down. Almost nothing is orderly and everything must be worried about.

In the Indian office, the payroll is a secret, and nobody is told what the other makes. Knowledge causes great stress, though the lack of information is also stressful, leading to spy games and office gossip.

Because there is no individualism in India, merit comes from seniority and the talented but young executive is stressed by the knowledge that he's not holding the position he deserves.. Indians are peerless detectors of social standing and the vertical hierarchy of the Indian office is sacrosanct.

Dennis Kux pointed out that Indian diplomats do not engage officially with an American of lower rank, even if the American was authorised to decide the matter. In the last decade, when Indians began owning companies abroad, the Wall Street Journal reported on cultural problems that arose. Their foreign employees learnt quickly that saying 'no' would cause their Indian bosses great offence, so they learnt to communicate with them as with children.

Indians shine in the west where their culture doesn't hold them back. In India honour is high and the individual is alert to slights from those below him, which discomfort him greatly. There is no culture of physical fitness, and because of this Indians don't have an active old age.

Past 60, they crumble. Within society they must step back and play their scripted role. Widows at that age, even younger, have no hope of remarriage because sacrifice is expected of them. Widowers at 60 must also reconcile to singlehood, and the family would be aghast if they showed interest in the opposite sex at that age, even though this would be normal in another culture.

Elders are cared for within the family, but are defanged when they pass on their wealth to their son in the joint family. They lose their self-esteem as they understand their irrelevance, and wither.

The writer is a former newspaper editor who lives in Bombay.

Message from Prafula about Palitana

Jai Jinendra All and Happy New Year to you all.

In case you have not already seen this, I thought you might be interested in seeing this report on the BBC website [BBC News - Faith and charity in Indian temple town](#) .

We hosted the BBC in Palitana during the mega mobility camp which is now finished, helping some 28,500 beneficiaries in one single camp which was opened by Gujarat's Chief Minister Narendra Modi. On 3 January, His Holiness The Dalai Lama also visited Palitana and the mega mobility camp and participated in a Jain pooja at the temple at the Taleti in Palitana. A meeting was held between Dalai Lama and Jain Sadhus, Sadvijis and scholars which lasted around two hours and was extremely interesting and useful. Following these successful discussions, it has been agreed that a conference will be held shortly between Jain and Buddhist scholars and saints to explore ways in which these two ancient faiths can help to address key issues including world peace and protection of nature.

I hope you will find this report interesting. A new selection of some 70 photographs will also be loaded on to the BBC website this week, taken over 10 days in Palitana. The camp itself was very successful and a post camp report with images will soon be available on the camp website www.palitana.net.

Prafula Shah -: ppraffyshah@gmail.com

Animals, climate change and water...

"If all Europeans in the EU-15 would switch from animal-based food to plant-based food only one day per week, this would have the same effect as taking more than 12 million cars out of the European roads." Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Chair, UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

Independent, 16th December 2009, page 19

Why is being veggie such an avoided topic in the environmental debate?! Why do mainstream, orthodox 'environmentalists' shy away from this crucial subject, which is integral to our daily lifestyle and represents the biggest and most direct form in which we can minimise our environmental impact? Much like alcohol production, which is environmentally harmful (5 litres of water required for one pint of brew).

Food choice is a direct and straightforward means of making our environmental footprint much lighter. It is not just about buying local and being 'organic', it is about the actual type of food as well. Some locally produced 'organic' food in the UK, is more carbon heavy than food imported from overseas!

And, also, is the planet just about humans. Are we saving the planet just for ourselves? Do animals, forests, lakes, mountains, glaciers, fish and biodiversity have a place in our vision for the future? Or are they disposable and expendable? So long as we can continue to survive and enjoy our customary lives with sufficient technological fixes to ensure 'sustainability' and continuity, is all that really matters?

Anonymous

My Visit to a Dairy Farm

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Indian Dairy:

I also visited a dairy farm near Bombay in India in November 1995. I observed similar things except no machine is used to milk the cow. Overall, things were actually worse because there are few enforced regulations. Also during my visits to India in 1997 and 1998, I learned more about Indian dairy operation.

Many dairies in India do not own cows. Milk is supplied to the dairy industry by local cowherds who own the cows. The local cowherds generally own 10 to 40 cows and they do not use machines to milk the cows.

However they keep cows pregnant all the time for continuous supply of milk. Every year each cow delivers a baby. The local cowherds can not absorb all the baby calves that are born every year in their business. Hence they sell the baby calves (70 to 80% of them) to the beef industry where they raised the calves for beef and are slaughtered in three to four years or to an illegal veal industry where they are being slaughtered in six months. In the holy city of Palitana, I found a newly born calf lying dead in a field close to my cousin's home. After investigation I found that the cow delivered a baby calf in the field and the owner left the newly born calf in the field and carried the cow to his place.

Also after four to five deliveries, the milk yield of an adult cow drops significantly and hence the cowherd replaces the old cow with a young one and sells the old cow to a slaughterhouse for cheap meat. Only few cows (5% or less) end up in a cow shelter place called Panjarapole.

In comparison, it seems maximum cruelty lies in the following actions, which are same in India, USA, and the rest of world:

- To keep cows pregnant continually
- Slaughtering their 70% to 80% of babies within six months by Veal industry or within five years by beef industry or let the baby die just after the birth
- Slaughtering the mother cows after five years of their fertile life while their life expectancy is 15 to 20 years.

Pravin K. Shah

Jaina Education Committee Chairperson

Director, Jain Study Center of North Carolina (Raleigh)

education@jaina.org

www.jaineLibrary.or

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