

AN AHIMSA CRISIS: YOU DECIDE



PRAKRIT BHARATI ACADEMY, JAIPUR

AN AHIMSA CRISIS: YOU DECIDE

Sulekh C. Jain

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by Sulekh C. Jain

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Dedication

Ahimsa (non-violence) and its practice is universal, non-denominational, and has no boundary of time, place, culture, geography, weather, politics, power, position or status in society.

It is unconditional and free from caste, creed, race, gender, age or any other human-made or natural differences.

This book is dedicated to all the practitioners of ahimsa, wherever they may be.

Publishers Note

Though modern civilization is characterized by a concern for fellow human beings, the foremost problem of our age is growing violence, both in thought and action. Fast evolving fields of communication and transportation have turned the world into a village. A child in Europe may have sympathy and extend help to one of his ilk in Africa. But juxtaposed is the spread of violence at individual, national and international levels, on scales, which are unprecedented. Terrorism is becoming common place and, ironically enough, respectable at some places.

With religion getting separated from, and spreading commercialization getting assimilated in daily life, we see that in the present day world killing has increased many-fold and sensitivity to life, whether animal or human, has declined in proportion. The need, therefore, is that this trend should be reversed and man should be made more humane not only in relation to man but also to other living creatures. However, one of the major problems with many of the protest groups, trying to fight against violence at national and international levels, is that personally they are not non-violent. True and effective remedy to violence could be found with personal commitment to Ahimsa inspiring personal transformation of individual, thereby creating islands of peace.

Though included in almost all religions, the doctrine of Ahimsa has been developed by Jainism to its perfection. Furthermore, its practical aspect has also been dealt with in great detail to attain maximum efficiency. So much so that in absence of continued practice Ahimsa has no value in Jainism. As the vehicle for effective implementation of their Ahimsa doctrine Jainism devised the theory of *Syadvad* based on the principle of *Anekantvad* (non-absolutism), another great contribution to world thought.

While science has been a great boon both in promoting material prosperity and rationalism, it has made our thinking, even in

areas other than science, extremely definitive. Consequently those who do not agree with us are treated as wrong. Earlier dogmatism was based on ignorance, now it is caused by certitude arising out of self-righteous rational thinking. *Syadvad* replaces certitude with relativity in thinking. Its application to personal conduct could make the world a safer place. The present ideological conflicts would not be as intense if this principle could permeate the minds of adversaries.

This book covers all these and many more issues related to Ahimsa with an analytical but pragmatic approach. In light of the doctrines the author examines the prevailing decadence seen in ritualistic and traditional observations among Jains caused by ignorance as well as misinterpretation of the principles and doctrines. It is a thorough and well researched presentation deserving commendation.

Dr. Sulekh C. Jain has brilliantly assimilated scriptural wisdom with inspiring incidents from his long physical, social, intellectual and spiritual journey to paint this panoramic verbal canvas of *Applied Ahimsa*. Though doctrinally he leans on Jainism, his applied approach is all encompassing and constructive. That is the reason even his criticism is inspiring and not hurting. He puts up a forceful appeal to Jains in particular and humanity in general to ponder, interact and work towards embracing the real Jain concept of Ahimsa by making it a way of life and not just a stunted ritual.

We are thankful to Dr. Sulekh C. Jain for entrusting the publication of this thought provoking work to Prakrit Bharati Academy. Our thanks also to all other people associated with the publication project, including the scholars who wrote the preface and forewords.

D. R. Mehta

Founder & Chief Patron

Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur

Preface

We are living an age when humanity is severely suffering with strong-headed religious fundamentalism, cultural, intellectual and political intolerance, various forms of terrorism, economically dominant imperialism, rampant environmental degradation and deep civilizational crises. The constantly growing stock of nuclear armaments is posing serious threat to our very existence. In such an unnerving scenario, Ahimsa or Non-violence appears to be the only solace as also the most effective last resort for saving the earth and its inhabitants.

More than ever before, we need to seriously understand and analyse various aspects of Ahimsa and explain how it can be practiced in our day to day life. It should not remain merely a theoretical principle or religious dictum; rather it must become a 'way of life'. The present book by Shri Sulekh C. Jain makes a commendable effort in this direction and deals with various dimensions of issues involved in comprehending and actually practicing Ahimsa.

Ahimsa is the central concept of Jain philosophical and religious tradition. Mahavira, the last Tirthankara (Propounder) of Jainism, identified it with "Dharma" (the duty) itself and declared "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" which means "Ahimsa is the highest or ultimate duty". The concept of Ahimsa in Jain tradition is deeply rooted in its metaphysics, which maintains equality of all souls and categorizes all living beings into one-sensed to five-sensed beings. It firmly believes that like human beings, the most evolved among five sensed beings (higher animals, beasts and birds), all other living beings including four sensed beings such as bees, three sensed beings such as ants, two sensed being such as worms, and even one-sensed beings such as trees (having sense of touch only), qualitatively have the same soul. The only difference being that of the level of development of consciousness.

Accordingly, every soul is potentially capable of attaining Moksha (the final liberation) or the highest level of

consciousness and even can become a Tirthankara. This strong acceptance of the potential equality of all souls naturally leads to the recognition of the value and claim of every life form same as one's own. "Respect of life wherever found" and principle of reciprocity i.e. "we should do to others as we would like to be done by", inevitably becomes the most important and fundamental duty, as defined in Jainism.

This approach of Jainism is in direct contrast to the anthropocentric world view which is grounded on the belief that man is the center of the universe and has a natural dominion over whatever exists in it – animate or inanimate. The universe is created solely for consumption and enjoyment of human beings and they have inviolable right to exploit Nature and all other non-human entities for their own ends. Except man, no other cosmic being has any intrinsic value. Every other entity is of instrumental value only. Descartes, the father of modern western philosophy, strongly believed that animals have no soul and plants are lifeless entities.

Contrary to this, according to the non-anthropocentric world view of Jains, every entity, from the smallest plant to the highly developed five sensed beings, is endowed with life and consciousness, has intrinsic value and is connected with rest of the world with a subtle relationship of love and care. Welfare and happiness of one form of life necessarily influences, and is influenced by those of other forms of life.

This universe is one unitary whole and any harm to any part will ultimately result in the harm to the whole. In last few decades, the pro-pounders of Deep Ecology ethics, such as Laurance Johnson (Morally Deep World), Freya Methews (Ecological Self) and others have also advocated fervently for a similar holistic view of life. Jain metaphysics which views all living beings as repositories of potential divinity, leads to an ethics based on profound reverence for all life forms and prescribes 'way of life' which causes least harm to the equilibrium and harmony of the universe.

The Jain scriptures/texts provide a very comprehensive, thorough and in-depth analysis of various dimensions of Ahimsa and even the most-minute details of do's and don'ts in this respect are worked out with a care and precision which is scarcely found anywhere else. Ahimsa, according to Jain religious texts, is not limited to merely not taking life or killing a life form. It is extended to the level where even thinking and speaking of taking life, permitting or encouraging others to take life are considered as violation of the vow of Ahimsa.

Moreover, merely abstaining from the killing of a living being is not enough for a Jain practitioner of Ahimsa. Along with this, he is expected to engage in activities which help in saving and improving the quality of life of every creature in the universe. The four kinds of dana - Ahar Dana, Aushadh Dana, Gyan Dana and Abhay Dana (providing food / nutrition, medicine and health services, education and knowledge and freedom from fear) are considered to be the basic duties of every Jain. The philosophical foundation of this concept of Dana lies in the positive aspect of Ahimsa. The strong emphasis on “Jiva Daya” in Jain scriptures reflects how compassion for every living being is central to Jainism and its principle of Ahimsa.

The present book by Sulekh C. Jain highlights these aspects of Jain religion and provides an extensive analysis of the practical issues involved in making Ahimsa a “way of life”. After giving a brief historical and theoretical exposition of the notion of Ahimsa, the author primarily focuses on the critical examination of various day to day practices of Jains, which are inconsistent with or are violative of the principle of the non-violence.

The issues such as, what kind of food true vegetarian may eat, why all Jains must be vegan, what animal-based products in clothing, cosmetics, medicine etc must be avoided, what are the basic principles of business and professional ethics a Jain must necessarily observe, how some of the social customs and practices of Jain community (such as Gender bias against female child, dowry system, use of money acquired through

violent means in charity and other religious functions, extra agent display of wealth in marriages and other family festivities, wastage of food in feasts etc) are inconsistent with the true spirit of Ahimsa, are analysed in details. The author seems to have thoroughly explored and researched the background of each of the issues raised and hence has not only provided ample relevant factual information but also has put forward strong arguments in support of his views. He has made special efforts to dispel prevalent misconceptions regarding hazards on the path of practicing Ahimsa as a 'way of life' and has done justice to every problem discussed in this respect.

The most impressive aspect of the book is that the author moves beyond simple description and engages the reader in one to one direct communication. After each issue discussed, he asks the reader— “– is this behaviour consistent with Ahimsa?—what is your decision?” Thus he challenges the reader, compels him to reflect on the issue seriously and then respond responsibly. Personal narratives of incidents of his life and those of other relatives enhance the appeal and overall impact of the contents of the book. Written in simple but lucid and interactive style, this book will be of great help to anyone who is striving to strictly follow the principle of non-violence in its true spirit.

I would like to congratulate the author Mr. Sulekh C. Jain for undertaking this interesting project and accomplishing the work in excellent manner. Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur also deserves special appreciation for publishing this book which will be useful both for researchers as well as general readers who are sincerely interested in understanding and practicing Ahimsa.

—Dr. Kusum Jain
Jaipur, India

Acknowledgement

I express my sincere gratitude to Professor Gary Francione (who I also call my soulmate), to Stephanie Vernon Hughes (for many suggestions for improvements and for editing) and to my many other friends for inspiring and persuading me to write my thoughts, my observations and reflections on ahimsa.

About the Author

Dr. Sulekh C. Jain



Dr. Jain has been active in many religious and social activities within the Jain and non-Jain communities in the U.S.A. and Canada. He is Founder /Co-Founder of several organization and institution in North America such as; Jain Center of Greater Boston (1973), Jain Society of Houston (1981), JAIN DIGEST Magazine (1985), Jinamanjari magazine (1985), JAINA Library (1988), Young Jains of America (1989), Jain Center of Central Ohio at Columbus (1991), Jain Academic Foundation of North America (1994), Mahavir Vision Inc.(1994), JAIN SPIRIT International Magazine (1999), World Council of Jain Academies (1999), JVB Preksha Meditation Center in Houston (1999) and International School for Jain Studies-ISJS (2004).

Dr. Jain is the past Secretary and President of Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) which he served for 8 years and past President of Jain Society of Houston, Jain Center of Cincinnati/Dayton and several other organizations. Currently he is the Chairman of Governing Council of International School for Jain Studies, a senior advisor to Center for Jain Studies at Claremont Lincoln University and a trustee of Mahatma Gandhi Library in Houston, Texas, USA.

He has traveled extensively in India, U.K, Europe, Australia and Asia, met many Jain Leaders world over and participated in many seminars. In 1990, he participated in the International Jain Delegation to Buckingham Palace in London for a meeting and to present Jain Declaration on Ecology and Environment to H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh. In 1993, he participated in the Parliament of World's Religions Conference in Chicago and also presented a paper there. In November 1997, he

presented a paper “Jainism; a Dynamic and Living Religion” and also represented Jainism at The Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace Conference held in Washington, D.C. In July 1998, Dr. Jain organized a World Conference on Jainism and Ecology at Harvard University, which was attended by many top Jain Scholars from USA, Canada, India and U.K including late Dr. L. M. Singhvi and late Dr. Nathmal Tatia. Prior to that, he had participated at two conferences at Harvard University on Multi Culturalism and Pluralism and at an International Seminar on Vedanta and Jainism held at Miami University, Ohio where he made presentations also. In 1999, he participated in the International Seminar on Swami Umaswati and His Works held in New Delhi, India. In addition, he has also participated at several meeting on Animal Rights including the June 1996 March for Animals in Washington, D.C.

He is passionate for introducing the study, teaching and research in Jainism at many universities and colleges in North America, Europe and other countries. Dr. Jain has taught credit hour courses in Jainism at the University of Dayton Ohio. Since 2004, he has been active in International School for Jain Studies (ISJS), an accelerated program on Jain philosophy, history and way of life for the North American University professors and students, which is integrated into academia. In ISJS program, India is the classroom. This is an experience-based program and along with the study of Jainism, the students also experience cultural immersion through home visitations, participations in festivals, rituals, and trips to historic sites in India. Many University students and professors have described the International Jain Summer School program as a unique and life-changing experience. In 2012, the program was expanded to include teachers from Schools in USA who too go to India to study Jainism and ahimsa. So far, nearly 500 teachers, students and professors from more than 25 universities of 15 countries have benefitted from these programs and as a result more than 10 scholars have already completed their PhDs in Jainism and many more are now studying to complete their PhDs. (see www.isjs.in)

Dr Jain has delivered many talks and seminars, authored several papers on Jainism and has provided help and guidance in the publications of at least 4 books on Jainism (Tattavartha Sutra by Dr. Nathmal Tatia, three books in the French language; Lord Mahavira, Aspects of Jainism, The Jains Today in the World by Pierre Amiel) and a set of eight pamphlets on various aspects of Jainism (published by Mahavir Vision, Inc.).

Sulekh Jain has received several academic, professional and cultural awards. In July 2009, he was awarded the JAINA RATNA award; the highest award given by the Federation of Jain Associations in North America for his lifelong services to Jain community. Prior to that in 2007, the International Jain Sangh of USA honored him with its Award of Excellence.

Sulekh Jain has been active in Jain community for the last 60 years. He writes papers and articles on Jain community issues and related topics and is frequently invited to give talks at many places in North America, Europe and in India.

During his entire life, even though he was born in a particular Jain tradition (sect), Dr. Jain has believed, practiced, preached, propagated and supported whole heartily the concept and creation of a one unified, non-sectarian, cohesive, dynamic, responsive, forward looking and visionary Jain Sangh in North America that is free from sectarianism and regionalism.

He has lived past 49 years of his life in UK and USA; more than 45 years in USA only. He is active and proactive to preach and practice ahimsa as a way of life and he himself follows a nearly vegan life style.

Professionally, Dr. Jain has a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering and an M.B.A. He has taught at several Universities in India, U.K and USA (including at M.I.T) and retired in 1998 from GE Aircraft Engines in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has nine US and International technical patents and authored or co-authored more than 50 technical papers and technical books.

He and his wife Mrs. Ravi Jain of more than 53 years have been living in Houston, Texas, USA since 1998.

Apologies

My Sincere MICHCHHLAMI DUKHADAM

The following chapters describe my lifetime observations of practice of ahimsa within the Jain community. This does not mean that the practices and incidents described in this book are peculiar to the Jain community only. In fact many non-Jains also practice the same regularly and quite frequently. Jains are supposed to be the keepers and protectors of ahimsa. It is their paramount duty to think, contemplate and then decide their prevalent habits, customs, traditions and practices with the light of ahimsa.

If any one feels offended by my candid observations and descriptions, I sincerely say Michchhami Dukhadam and ask for his/her forgiveness.

I am honored

Friends, normally a book contains one foreword but this book has three from three very eminent and distinguished scholars who themselves teach and practice ahimsa in their daily lives.

All of these scholars in their forewords expound and explain the significance of applied ahimsa very clearly and convincingly. These forewords add value and significance to the subject matter of this book. I am sure; the readers will find the views of these scholars very refreshing.

I thank them all wholeheartedly.

Sulekh C. Jain

Foreword by Glenn D. Paige

This extraordinary book “An Ahimsa in Crisis: You Decide” offers an opportunity for education and critical reflection by Jains and all who seek to realize nonviolent conditions from individual to global life. It is a model for self-critical inquiry within every other peace-seeking faith, philosophy, and practice.

The author’s self-revelatory introduction is reminiscent of the Confessions of St. Augustine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and A Confession by Leo Tolstoy. Being neither monk nor academic scholar, but an engineering-trained Jain leader, his exposition of Jain Ahimsa ideals and critique of practices grows out of 50 years of cross-cultural experience bridging India and America. It will encourage self-reflection by readers in every vocation.

For non-Jains this book will introduce Jain thought and practices related to Ahimsa (nonviolence in thought, word and deed). As the world’s most comprehensive nonviolent religion, distinctive but closely related to Buddhism, Jainism seeks non-injury to all forms of sentient life (humans, animals, plants, and the life-supporting elements of the environment). While Jainism historically has not been a proselytizing faith within India or abroad, in view of pervasive global violence Sulekh Jain seeks to contribute to universal understanding of its nonviolent transforming potentials by introducing it in world universities, not only in departments of religion and philosophy but in other fields of education. To this end he and colleagues have founded the International School for Jain Studies (ISJS) that brings teachers and students to India. In this book readers will benefit from his skill as cross-cultural educator. One can envision it as a valuable text inviting discussion at all levels of formal and adult education as well as in Jain and other communities, media, and the peace policy-making world.

Sulekh Jain’s vision is that every human being can become an ahimsak (truly nonviolent person). He does not mean that

everyone becomes a Jain but that universal values of nonviolence in thought, word and deed become practiced in everyday life. The book ends with passionate advocacy and empirical demonstration of the human and environmental benefits of a vegan diet as the mark of a “truly nonviolent person.” He humbly admits the difficulty of achieving this even among Jains for whom vegetarianism is a defining expected practice.

As a scholar still on a continuing journey from soldier, to academic political scientist, to awakening to nonviolence, and on to exploration of spiritual, scientific, and practical human capabilities to end killing of humans, I am greatly indebted to Jain teaching and encouragement. Also to demonstrations of historical and contemporary non-killing individual and social capabilities among Buddhists, Christians, Gandhians, Hindus, Kingians, Muslims, and secular humanists. Among Jains, teachers have been Acharya Tulsi and the Anuvrat Movement, Yuvacharya Mahapragya who surprised and shocked me on first meeting by saying “We’ll never get to nonviolence by religion alone” and stressed understanding of bioneurological factors. Swami Dharmananda taught me Preksha Meditation. Dr. S. L. Gandhi first introduced me to Jainism through the Anuvrat Global Organization. From first meeting in Honolulu Dr. Sulekh Jain has been an inspiring example of Jain leadership. Thus my gratitude and enthusiasm for this book’s educational and challenging introduction to Jain thought, problems of practice, and relevance for achieving global conditions of nonkilling Ahimsa. For from birth to natural death no human purpose can be pursued if one is killed.

Glenn D. Paige, Ph.D

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“No More Killing!”

Foreword by Gary Francione

Jai Jinendra!

Jainism is the dharma of ahimsa. Although other spiritual traditions incorporate ahimsa, some more prominently than others, ahimsa is the central focus of Jainism. Everything else in Jainism may be regarded as a footnote to that central principle.

Unfortunately, Jainism is not immune to a problem that affects all spiritual traditions: a central concept may somehow be lost as the tradition struggles to accommodate other interests. Just as the Christian concept of love has been diluted in a way that makes love consistent with violence and hatred, the concept of ahimsa has been diluted in the Jain community and has become consistent with various types of himsa.

In this book, Dr. Sulekh Jain, a prominent and important voice in the Jain community both in India and in North America, is concerned to restore the idea that Jainism is about ahimsa—not just as a word but as a living concept that animates and infuses the daily practice of Jainism. Although he talks about ahimsa in different contexts, he concentrates a great deal of the book on our treatment of animals and the importance of not consuming any products.

This book will undoubtedly provoke a great deal of controversy. Dr. Jain is challenging what he sees as a crisis in Jainism itself. But he never accuses or condemns; instead, he makes a heartfelt plea to Jains—and to all who care about ahimsa—to recognize the importance to all of us and to the earth itself of taking ahimsa seriously in our daily lives. Dr. Jain is a man of great depth who thinks hard and critically. I was, therefore, honored that he asked me to contribute some words to his book.

Jainism and Ahimsa

Ahimsa, or nonviolence, is the fundamental principle of Jainism. *Ahimsa Parmo Dharma*—nonviolence is the highest

religious duty. We can think about the concept of ahimsa in Jainism as having two dimensions: a dimension that focuses on ahimsa as a spiritual notion and a dimension that focuses on ahimsa as a matter of normative ethics. In certain respects, this distinction tracks the distinction proposed by Acharya Kundakunda in *Samayasāra* between the *niscaya naya*, the nonconventional or absolute point of view, and the *vyavahara naya*, the conventional or worldly point of view.

Ahimsa as a spiritual concept concerns the state of the soul, or *atma*, and says that we achieve ahimsa only when the *atma* is in a state of complete tranquility, or a state of being *vitaraṅga*, or free of attachment or aversion. If the *atma* is vibrating in any way, it is attracting karma, and whether that karma be good (*punya*) or bad (*paṇa*), there is not—and cannot be—a state of ahimsa. So if we have not achieved liberation, or *moksha*, we are necessarily participating in some form of himsa.

Ahimsa as a concept of normative concept focuses on not injuring other sentient beings in thought, speech, or action. *Dravya himsa* is used to describe the actual action of injuring a sentient being. *Bhāva himsa* is the intent to inflict injury. Both types of himsa result in the accumulation of *paṇa* karma. When these two sorts of himsa are combined—when a violent action is undertaken with a violent intention—the karmic result is most inauspicious.

Jainism and Vegetarianism

The Jain ascetic is enjoined not to commit violence against any living being, including those with one sense (*ekendriyas*) and that are immobile (*sthavar*), such as plants or those organisms that have earth, water, fire, or air as bodies. But all Jains are forbidden from himsa against all mobile beings (*trasa*), whether they have two (*dvindriya*), three (*trindriya*), four (*chaturindriya*), or five (*pañchendriya*) senses. The five senses are: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. The mammals, birds, and fish that humans regularly consume as food all belong in the highest class of those beings with five senses—a class in which humans, who are mammals, belong as well. This prohibition is not limited to what a person does directly (*kṛita*) and extends

to causing others to do himsa (karita) and to approving of the himsa of others (anumodana). This clear and broad rejection of himsa by Jainism is the basis for virtually unanimous support among Jains for not consuming meat, poultry, and fish.

Jainism and Veganism: The Problem

But many Jains are not vegans. Many—indeed most—consume dairy products such as milk, clarified butter or ghee, ice cream, yogurt and cheese. Many eat eggs, not usually as a separate food but as contained in cakes or other baked items. They use dairy and wool in temple worship events. They wear wool, leather, and silk, and use products that contain animal ingredients.

In order to justify vegetarianism as a morally coherent position that can inform our understanding of ahimsa, it would be necessary to somehow formulate a limiting principle that can distinguish meat from other animal products. But all animal products—including dairy, eggs, wool, and leather—involve inflicting suffering and death on mobile, five-sensed beings, with the exception being silk worms, who are considered to have two senses¹. Some forms of production are more brutal than others and some have more death rather than others, but, under the very best of circumstances there is a great deal of suffering involved in the production of these products, and the death of animals is a necessary aspect of any industry or practice that uses animals. Jains are necessarily committed to veganism if they are to seek to apply ahimsa in its normative form in a way that is at least consistent with the recognition

¹ Jains consider worms as two-sensed (touch and taste) beings. They are sentient in that they can experience pain. Silk is usually produced by boiling the cocoons of silkworms who are in the pupal stage of development and before the worms become moths. About 10,000 worms are killed by being boiled alive to make one silk sari. This clearly involves himsa. There is an alternative form of silk—"Ahimsa silk"—which is produced in different ways that apparently do not involve boiling the worms but do involve worms starving and otherwise dying—and this silk represents a small fraction of the market anyway. I am not going to discuss silk in the body of the article so that I can focus on the issue of inflicting suffering and death on five-sensed beings, a group that includes humans. If a reader does not find the argument compelling with respect to five-sensed beings, she will not find it compelling with respect to worms.

that eating animal flesh is a serious violation of ahimsa. Moreover, the failure of Jains to adopt veganism rather than vegetarianism as a baseline makes ahimsa appear to be arbitrary and this weakens the normative force of ahimsa as a foundational principle.

The usual response at this point is to say that some treatment of animals used in the dairy, wool, and silk industries is terrible, these products can be produced without violence in “humane” ways.

But this way of addressing the matter misses the point in two ways.

First, the issue as far as Jainism is concerned is not how violent dairy products or wool are. The issue is whether they involve violence at all. If they do, then dairy and wool involve the intentional harming of mobile, five-sensed beings. And there can be no doubt that the most humanely produced dairy and wool involve harming and causing distress to animals and killing animals. That is, the dairy and wool industries necessarily involve the suffering and death of mobile, multi-sensed (and for the most part five-sensed) beings.

Animals used in dairy production are kept alive longer than animals used for meat, treated as badly if not worse, and end up in the same slaughterhouses after which humans consume their bodies. Cows used for dairy are impregnated forcibly on a yearly basis and are manipulated with hormones to produce six to eight times as much milk as they would normally produce. They are killed after about five or six years although their natural lifespan is about twenty years. The male babies of dairy cows are sold into the veal industry and most of the females are used in the dairy industry. It is an endless cycle of exploitation, suffering, and death. There is an inextricable relationship between the meat industry and the dairy issue. You cannot have a dairy industry without a meat industry. It is no coincidence that India now is the largest producer of dairy products in the world² at the same time that the Indian beef

2 “Dairy Industry in India: 2013-2019,” Research and Markets, available at http://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/dklccg/dairy_industry_in.

market is growing and India is exporting 44% more beef than four years ago³.

Many Jains, particularly those in the older generations who spent their childhood in India, still hold the idyllic concept of the dairy cow that grazes in the pasture, and is provided with good care and has a good life. If milk or other products come from such an animal, how can that be morally problematic? In the first place, no animal products come from such animals. Most dairy products—wherever in the world they are produced, including India—come from animals kept in intensive conditions known as “factory farming” that involve unspeakable brutality and violence. Even those animals who are supposedly raised in “free-range” circumstances, or whose products are advertised as “organic,” are raised in conditions that may be slightly less brutal than the normal factory farm, but there is still a great deal of violence, suffering, and death. Small rural milk producers in India use artificial impregnation, keep animals tethered, prevent calves from drinking milk, sell calves to the meat industry (even where cow slaughter is prohibited, buffalo slaughter is not and buffaloes make up about 50% of the India dairy herd), and sell cows for slaughter after no longer than ten years.

The person who keeps only one cow on her or his property must keep that cow pregnant in order for the animal to give milk and this means that there will be a steady stream of calves. In most cases, most if not all of these calves will end up on someone’s table. And whenever a calf is separated from her or his mother, there is tremendous suffering from that alone. Is a glass of milk or ghee or raita worth inflicting even that suffering? The picture of the happy cow grazing in the pasture bears no relationship to reality. The process of producing dairy—however “humane” it may be—involves himsa. The details of treatment under various systems of production and in different countries are matters of detail that go to how much harm is present in each system in each place.

3 Pratiksha Ramkumar, “Beef exports up 44% in 4 years, India is top seller,” *The Times of India*, April 1, 2013, available at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-04-01/india/38188217_1_buffalo-meat-tonnes-transport-and-slaughter.

But all systems involve himsa; the use of animals to produce dairy itself involves himsa. There cannot be a dairy industry without the suffering and deaths of animals.

The same is true of eggs. After hatching, the chicks are separated into males and females. Because male chicks will not be able to produce eggs and, because laying chickens are a specific laying breed that are not suitable to be “meat” animals, more than 100 million male chicks are killed in the United States alone every year by being thrown alive into grinding machines, suffocated in garbage bags, or gassed. Laying hens are confined in tiny battery cages where they get, on average, 67 square inches of space, or about the size of a single sheet of letter-sized paper, to live their entire lives. Most laying hens are subjected to forced molting, where the birds are starved for a period, causing them to lose their feathers and forcing their reproductive processes to rejuvenate, and to debeaking to stop the birds from injuring each other. Those hens who are not confined in battery cages are raised in “cage-free” or “free-range” circumstances that still result in horrible suffering. And laying hens are all slaughtered once their egg-producing capacity decreases, usually after one or two laying cycles. So if all you eat are eggs, you are still directly responsible for the suffering and death of many chickens. It is interesting to note that the Indian egg industry is growing at a compounded annual rate of over 8%, with production increasing from 75 billion eggs in 2012 to about 95 billion in 2015⁴.

The same is true of wool. Wool may be produced more or less humanely in that the farmers can be more or less gentle when shearing sheep but all shearing involves frightening the animals and the most gentle shearing involves cuts and other injuries. The farmer may or may not engage in mulesing, which involves cutting away skin from the sheep’s rump in order to create a scar that restricts the skin and prevents flies laying eggs in that area. But the sheep are subjected to some level of suffering

4 Madhvi Sally, “Egg production in India may cross 95 crore in next three years,” *The Economic Times*, Dec. 14, 2012, available at: http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-14/news/35820226_1_egg-production-egg-consumption-total-egg.

and they all end up in the same slaughterhouse. Again, wool necessarily involves suffering and death; it necessarily involves himsa. And leather is the skin of a slaughtered animal. Leather directly and necessarily involves himsa⁵.

Second, even if, in some perfect world, dairy, eggs, wool, and leather could be produced without violence, this is not that world. These products are not available to anyone at the present time. I have had many Indian people tell me that milk could be produced without harming cows. But these people all live in Los Angeles or New York or Mumbai. And, even if dairy products could be produced without harming cows, which is not the case, these people have no access to such products today. They often say that they buy only “organic” milk. But “organic” only means that the cows are fed organic food and are not given antibiotics and growth hormones but they are still exploited, impregnated forcibly, slaughtered around 5 years of age, many times kept in small restricted areas, and their newborn calves are taken away for veal. In fact, cows involved in “organic” milk production may suffer more because farmers are not able to use antibiotics to address mastitis infections; instead, the cow is usually just taken out of production until the infection subsides. But this means that the cow has to suffer with the infection. Even the consumer of milk from the small Indian dairy cooperative cannot buy milk free of himsa. Again, some dairy may involve less himsa; some more. But all dairy involves some himsa. All wool—even the most “humanely” produced—involves some himsa. And as we cannot get the skin of a dead animal without the animal being dead, all leather involves himsa. Although some leather might come from animals who were not slaughtered as part of the meat industry, such supply could, in reality, constitute a minute portion of the market.

Jainism and Veganism: Explanations That Do Not Work

To their credit, most Jains accept that, as a factual matter, there is harm to animals inherent in the dairy, egg, wool, and

5 The same analysis applies to silk. All silk involves intentionally inflicting suffering and death on two-sensed organisms.

leather industries. They usually rely on one of four arguments to justify that harm. None of these arguments works.

First, there is the argument from tradition. Some defend the use of animal products because it has been traditional to use dairy products or wool or leather. But tradition can no more suffice here than it can in any other area of human conduct. If Jainism stands for anything, it represents the notion that ethical principles are a matter of rational thought and careful consideration. It is precisely when we have been lulled into complacency by tradition that we must be most conscientious.

As part of this appeal to tradition, some Jains say that the Tirthankaras, or the human beings who have achieved omniscience and who teach it to others, never condemned the consumption of dairy as involving himsa and that some ancient texts contain references to ghee or other dairy products being present on auspicious occasions. But this is like using the Bible as an authority to justify homophobia or capital punishment. The important books of most religious and spiritual traditions are full of all sorts of inconsistent ideas and matters that the most fundamentalist believer does not accept. So the fact that there may be references in Jain scriptures to dairy is irrelevant. The fact that dairy was consumed by Jains thousands of years ago is irrelevant. The point is that Jains regard ahimsa as the foundational and defining principle of their tradition and ahimsa prohibits the intentional infliction of suffering and death on mobile, multi-sensed creatures. The only question for the Jain is whether the conduct in question—consuming dairy or wearing wool or leather—involves inflicting suffering and death on mobile, multi-sensed beings.

Second, there are some who say that we cannot live a perfect life so it is acceptable for us to eat dairy or to use other animal products as a “compromise.” Jainism certainly recognizes that, with the exception of the omniscient who have gained liberation, we cannot avoid all violence if we live in samsara, the material world. That is the primary problem with samsara; our existence necessarily adversely affects others. But if our inability to avoid all himsa means that we can eat dairy or use

wool, which involves inflicting injury and death on five-sensed beings, then it must mean that we can eat flesh as well. That is, there is no limiting principle that would allow us to distinguish between dairy and wool or leather, and flesh, or indeed, from any form of violence. If we cannot avoid all violence, and, therefore dairy, egg, wool, and leather are morally acceptable, then why just dairy, eggs, wool, and leather? Why not meat? Why not robbery or assault? Or murder? So this justification for nonveganism also fails.

The third and most frequently used justification involves the principle of *anekantavada*, or what has come to be known as the Jain “doctrine of relativity” that no position on any issue can be absolutely true because all positions can only reflect a particular perspective. When I have discussed the need to eschew dairy, wool, and leather, I have had Jains say to me that the principle of *anekantavada* means that I cannot say that it is immoral to consume or use these items; all I can say is that it is immoral from my perspective. Any such argument must fail.

The doctrine of *anekantavada* concerns ontology, or the nature of existence, and has nothing to do with moral issues. The doctrine developed historically as a way of mediating the dispute between Hinduism, which emphasized the permanence of things, and Buddhism, which emphasized the impermanence of things. The Jain doctrine of *anekantavada* says that *dravya* or substances, including living and non-living, material and non-material, are permanent in that these substances possess certain *gunas* or qualities. However, matter is a constant state of changing; the *pariyayas* modes or states of matter are always in flux. So existence is both permanent and impermanent and no one can have complete knowledge of a substance because that would require knowledge of all modes of the substance, which only the omniscient can know. Non-omniscient beings can only have partial knowledge of the substance depending on standpoint or perspective. But as we can see, this doctrine has nothing to do with morality. The doctrine of *anekantavada* simply cannot be used to stand for the proposition there is no absolute truth so we cannot say with any certainty that consuming dairy or wearing wool

or leather is morally wrong as involving himsa inflicted on mobile, multi-sensed beings. Indeed, if this interpretation of *anekantavada* were even possible, it would make any assertion about *ahimsa*—from eating meat to human genocide—subject to a relativist interpretation. But the *Sutras* contain the wisdom of the *Tirthankaras* and, in *Âkârânga Sûtra*, it is written: “All breathing, existing, living sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away.” That is clear; it does not admit of any relativist interpretation. Fourth, some argue that it is inconvenient to practice veganism. Convenience cannot be the touchstone. No Jain would think that considerations of convenience justified eating meat, poultry, or fish. If, as I and others maintain, dairy, eggs, and other animal products involve himsa inflicted on innocent mobile beings, then convenience can similarly not serve as a moral justification. But having said this, it is certainly no more inconvenient to be a vegan than it is to be a vegetarian. There are a variety of delicious non-dairy “milks” (soy, rice, and almond) available and these can be used for cooking and in beverages. There are delicious vegan “butters” made from soy that can substitute for ghee. The range of vegan clothing has increased dramatically in recent years and it is now easy to avoid the use of animal products for clothing.

Conclusion

The issue of veganism is not merely significant; it is crucial for Jainism. If Jains do not embrace veganism, then their rejection of eating animal meat is simply arbitrary. We cannot make a coherent distinction between meat, dairy, and leather in that all involve the intentional infliction of suffering and death on mobile, multi-sensed beings. To say that *ahimsa* prohibits one but not the other makes *ahimsa* meaningless as a normative principle because the principle would not even pertain to all situations that are substantially similar. That is, it is one thing if a moral principle covers situations *x* and *y* but a distinguishing feature makes situation *z* different from *x* and *y* in some relevant way and there is a question as to whether the moral principle still covers situation *z*. But if *x*, *y*, and *z* are all relevantly similar,

and the moral principle is interpreted to cover situations x and y but not z, then the moral principle is being applied in an obviously arbitrary way. A moral principle that cannot rule out instances of conduct that are substantially similar is necessarily weak because it does not include any limiting principle.

In this regard, I will recount an incident that occurred when I was giving a lecture on animal ethics at a university and I was explaining that I objected to animal exploitation in part because of my commitment to nonviolence. A student pointed out that the Jains, who made nonviolence the central focus of their spiritual tradition, did not think that dairy foods or eggs other animal products, such as leather or wool, involved violence. The student asked me to justify my understanding of nonviolence as including dairy, eggs, wool, and leather in light of the Jain view that these did not involve himsa. He pointed out that the Jains must have some principle that distinguishes these other animal products from meat, which is prohibited by ahimsa. I responded that there was no distinguishing principle. He replied that ahimsa must then be an arbitrary notion. He was correct. And because a non-Jain student can see the oblivious flaw in the prevalent understanding of ahimsa, that is a signal to Jains to rethink an interpretation of ahimsa that is so clearly arbitrary.

Finally, I recall visiting a Digambara temple once and there was a sign at the entrance of the main area of worship that read, “No leather allowed.” I asked a Jain friend who was with me why leather was prohibited inside the temple. He said: “Because of himsa.” I remarked him that it was odd that Jains thought that it was morally acceptable to wear something outside the temple that was prohibited inside the temple. He had no answer. That is because there really is no good answer.

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Foreword by Philip Clayton

There is nothing so small and subtle as the atom or any element as vast as space. Similarly, there is no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life.

(Bhagwan Mahavir)

Whether conscious of it or not, every individual person is on a spiritual quest. Every man and woman has emotional and bodily desires; each has beloved family and friends; each naturally seeks to find comfort and avoid pain. The spiritual quest has everything to do with how we respond to these desires.

Specifically, we have two choices. We can choose to focus on our own good—letting pursuit of our own pleasure and convenience be our god—or we can focus primarily on the good of others. Then, as we learn lift our eyes beyond ourselves toward others, we face a second choice: will it be only the good of our friends and family that we live for, or will it be the good of all living beings?

The heart of An Ahimsa Crisis is about these two choices.

Many people today devote their lives to their own pleasure and gain, without regard for the costs to other persons and other living things. By contrast, the Jain way of life calls each one to set aside his or her ego and self-interest. No religion, East or West, has grasped the radical nature of this call as fully as has the Jain tradition. To escape from karma, to embody compassion, we must live in such a way that no living thing is harmed and that the good of others is advanced by our lives. The life that does no harm is the life of ahimsa.

Each of us must decide. Recall the classic poem by William Arthur Dunkerley

*To every man there openeth a way, and ways, and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,*

And the low soul gropes the low.

And in between, on the misty flats, the rest drift to and fro.

But to every man there openeth a high way and a low;

And every man decideth the way his soul shall go.

Truly a vast range of responses is open to us. The “high souls,” sadhus and mahatmas, renounce personal and bodily desires to a remarkable extent. Others, seduced by the comforts of wealth, seem to lose all sight of the needs of others, focusing increasingly on themselves. Most of us “drift to and fro” somewhere in between, inspired by the ideal of ahimsa but taking only baby steps in that direction.

As the Taoist sage Lao Tzu wrote, “He who controls himself controls the world.” If you want to know the spiritual maturity of a country, culture, or age, ask about where its people are along the path toward ahimsa ... and in which direction they are moving. As are the people, so also is the age.

Dr. Sulekh Jain writes with the wisdom of one who has traveled the world and observed the lives of its inhabitants over some eight decades. He sees much that is encouraging, and in these pages he shares inspiring stories that will bring tears to your eyes. But Dr. Jain also recognizes tendencies in our age—in India as well as in the West—that are deeply troubling. Above all else, he sees, the spiritual malaise of our age is reflected in the myriad forms of violence (himsa) that we inflict on other living beings in both blatant and subtle ways.

The book in your hands burns with a message of hope. The spiritual traditions of the world offer at their core a common call to compassion. Among them all, one in particular offers wise council to men and women in a world addicted to violence. The ancient Jain tradition, more clearly than any other tradition in humanity’s history, has placed the practice of doing no harm, ahimsa, at the very center of attention. Through the ages monks and nuns, but also ordinary Jain men and women, have learned to recognize the roots of violence in their thought and action and, becoming enlightened, to take

steps toward self-transformation. Jain teachings offer time-tested techniques for developing inner ahimsa, until it fills one's whole being and flows outward for the sake of all living beings.

In every religious tradition one finds a struggle between narrow (safe) and broad (spiritual) interpretations. When the ancient Jewish people were tempted to reduce their religion to a simple legalism, their greatest rabbis, among them a rabbi named Jesu, reminded them that the heart of the Law is the love of God and of neighbor. Similarly, Dr. Jain holds before us here what he calls "ahimsa beyond food and adornments." The true practitioner "strives to practice ahimsa in everything, consistently, both inside and outside the temple or place of worship. " Perhaps the whole book is summed up in these momentous sentences:

The teachings of ahimsa refer not only to wars and visible physical acts of violence, but also to the violence in the hearts and minds of human beings, their lack of concern and compassion for their fellow human beings and for the natural world. Ancient Jain texts explain that violence is not defined by actual harm only, for this may be unintentional. It is the intention to harm, the absence of compassion, that makes action violent. Without violent thought there could be no violent actions. When violence enters our thoughts, we should remember, "You are that which you intend to hurt, injure, insult, torment, persecute, torture, enslave or kill."

In one sense, Dr. Jain does nothing more than to remind us what has always been the heart of the Jain way of life. Lord Mahavira taught that all plants, animals, and humans have a jiva, a living soul. All are of equal value, deserving our respect and compassion. Doing violence to any one of them is himsa, and himsa creates karma. The Jain view of reality is called *paras-prop-graho-jivanam* in the sacred texts, which Dr. Jain beautifully interprets as "all life forms are bound together and dependent on each other for their support." In a sense,

the ecological worldview is a rediscovery of this ancient Jain teaching.

In another sense, however, this book accomplishes something far more significant. Not only does it call Jains back to their true heritage; it also shows how the pursuit of ahimsa is relevant to all human beings: Indian or Western, Hindu or Christian, atheist or believer in God. As Dr. Jain writes, “To injure any living being in one’s thought, speech, or action constitutes violence, or himsa... Harm caused by carelessness [or ignorance, we might add] is as reprehensible as harm caused by deliberate action.”

For hundreds of years Jains have defined themselves by their ethnic heritage, their language, and their unique culture within the diversity that is India. But if ahimsa is the heart of Jainism, then Ahimsaks across the globe are Jains at heart. Religions that place non-violence at the center are brothers and sisters: the “peace traditions” within Christianity, such as the Mennonites; Quakers, with our strong commitment to non-violence; most serious Buddhist practitioners; and many, many others, whatever their race or creed. At the heart of this book is a truly revolutionary claim:

At the deepest spiritual level, Jainism is nothing more—but also nothing less—than the way humans must live when we realize that all living things form a single interdependent web of life. What was revealed by Lord Mahavira and practiced by innumerable Jain sadhus through the centuries, we now recognize, is the goal and ideal toward which all humans must strive. In our day, Jainism has become the world religion. All enlightened persons must be Jains in this, the broadest sense of the term.

To recognize the himsa in one’s own heart and gently, step by step, to eradicate it from thought and action, as the Jain sages have taught—this is the very center of the spiritual quest. In these days when humans are rapidly destroying Mother Earth

and her ecosystems, it is also the only course of action that will save the planet. No science, no laws, no doctrines will replace the transformation to non-violence at the core of one's own being.

For Jain families, both in India and in the diaspora, the “ahimsa crisis” will be a matter of deep concern. May you find the most beautiful parts of your own tradition reflected back to you in these pages, like a flawless mirror; and may it inspire renewed commitment and pride in your being Jain. For non-Jains, the ahimsa crisis represents a moving and powerful invitation. May you come to recognize that, although the heart of all spiritual practices is compassion, the hands and feet and face of compassion is ahimsa. Harm no living being, in thought, word or deed, for truly all are of value in the one web of life.

*One who neglects or disregards the existence
Of earth, water, fire, air, vegetation and all other lives
Disregards his own existence
Which is entwined with them. (Lord Mahavir)*

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Meanings of Some Hindi & Prakrit Words Used Here

Acaranga	a Jain holy scripture /book
Ahimsa/Ahiṁsā	non-violence
Acharya	the head of an order of monks and nuns
Aatmaa	soul
Anootanbandhi	a severe form of himsa and binding of karmas, nearly permanent, which cannot be altered or erased easily.
Ahimsak	refers to a non-violent person
Ahimsatmak	non-violent
Anekantavada	multiple view points
Asrava	inflow/influx of karmas
Ajiva/ajiv	a non-living being
Anuvratas	small vows (practical non-violence, truth, non-stealing, limited celibacy and limited possessions)
Aprigraha	limited or non-possession/non-attachments
Bandh	binding of karmas
Boli or Ghee boli	a practice of bidding to raise funds for holy causes
Bharat Kshetra	refers to India
Bhai	“brother” or a show of respect
Bhagwan	LORD, a perfect being/omniscient
Digambra	a sect of Jainism
Dhanyavaad	“Thank you”
Das Laxan or Das Lakshan	a Jain holy festival of 10 days
Goondas	criminal people or people with bad character
Gotra	a sub-caste
Himsa /hiṁsā	violence

Himsatmak	violent
Jai Jinendra	a Jain salutation. (meaning “victory to those who have conquered their inner enemies, passions”)
Jambu Dweep	part of Jain cosmology (a very large continent). of which India is just one country
Jiva/jiv	living being
Karmas	Deeds, actions
Lathi Charge	beating the crowds with sticks
Milni	a tradition of giving money and presents
Muni	a monk
Mahavratas	the great vows (non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-possession)
Nirjara	a process of shedding karmas/deeds or destroying /annihilation of karmas
Naan	Indian bread
Pinjrapole or panjrapole	a protected animal shelter/sanctuary
Pooja	prayers and other rituals
Pranas	life force
Prashad	offering of food or snacks in a temple
Pranatipata	sin of killing or harming
Pravachan	religious discourses/lecture
Paryushana	Jains’ holy festival, celebrations of eight days
Pratikraman	a methodical system in Jainism to ask for atonement and forgiveness for all acts of himsa (violence) that have been committed.
Paneer	Indian cheese
Pratima	Jain idols/deity, statues
Prigraha	accumulation of wealth and possessions
Panch Kalyanaks	a Jain celebration to celebrate the five most important events in the life of a Jain tirthankar (LORD)

Papas	bad deeds
Punya	good deeds
Roti	bread
Roomali Roti	Indian bread
Sangh	community
Samvar	stoppage of inflow of karmas
Sadhu	monk
Sadhvi	nun
Samsara	universe
Saman	a category of a male renunciate
Samani	a category of female renunciate
Shiksha Vratas	guiding vows
Sharavak	male householder
Shravika	female householder
Sangh	a community consisting of monks, nuns, householders (male and female)
Samyaktava Bhava	staying in equanimity
Saman Suttam	a holy book of Jains
Sutra	holy book or holy verses
Shakahari	vegetarian
Tandoori Roti	Type of Indian bread
Thali	a food plate or items that we eat from
Tirtha	Object of worship
Tirthasathan	a holy place
Tirtha Yatra	Pilgrimage to place of worship
Uttradhayan	a Jain holy book
Veg	vegetarian food
Vanaspati Ghee	Hydrogenated oil for cooking
Vratas	vows of restraint

WHY THIS BOOK?

*AN AHIMSA CRISIS: CONFLICT OR OPPORTUNITY—
YOU DECIDE*

This book is about ahimsa (non-violence), the nonviolent way of life; it is written as a dialog with my other fellow practitioners of ahimsa; especially Jains. This book is intended for lay readers and discusses how they might practice ahimsa today. It is not about the lifestyles of monks and nuns of the Jain tradition or of any other tradition.

The Jain Way of Life (JWOL) and the Ahimsak (non-violent) Way of Life (AWOL) are two sides of the same coin.

Nearly 2,600 years ago, Lord Mahavira, the last Tirthankar or “ford-maker” of Jains, laid down a very specific and detailed code of conduct for Jain laity in regard to the practice of ahimsa in their daily lives. He, through his own self-practice, preaching, and practical demonstrations also strongly objected and revolted against the prevalent practices of *himsa* (violence) in many customs and traditions of the day. These practices included animal sacrifices in religious rituals, slavery; especially of women, societal discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, and economic status, and pollution and destruction of the environment. Lord Mahavira made ahimsa the centerpiece of his sermons and of his fourfold *Sangh* (community).

The concept of unconditional ahimsa towards all life forms is the most profound contribution of Jains to India and to the world. In India, ahimsa of the Jains has played a significant role in shaping many customs and traditions, one being vegetarianism.

Since Lord Mahavira's passing in 527 BCE, Jains, both in their lifestyle and practice, have steadfastly, zealously, and with utmost devotion, preserved this great treasure and inheritance. Over the centuries, Jains have sometimes been subjected to extreme forms of violence, but they have never wavered, walked away from or compromised with ahimsa. For example, when thousands of their temples and places of worship were being destroyed, when their monks and nuns were being tortured or when Jains in general were being discriminated against, they found refuge in ahimsa.

During the partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, in 1947, when many inhabitants in some parts of India and Pakistan were engaged in uncontrolled himsa, Jains too became victims of torture, looting, burning, rape, and killing. Yet even in those testing and trying times, they did not abandon ahimsa.

In fact, the Jain community may be the only living, continuous example of ahimsa in the history of humankind. Throughout the entire history of India, Jains have never been part of a problem. They have always been a part of a solution. Such is the legacy and practice of ahimsa by the Jains. One could say that ahimsa and Jains are synonymous words.

Jain monks and nuns, with their most austere life style, strict adherence to the code of ahimsa —in the case of digambara monks not even possessing the clothing on their bodies — become a living example of ahimsa even today that provokes reverence and respect in the hearts and minds of all those with whom they come in contact.

For centuries, Jains have steadfastly practiced ahimsa in their daily lives. For example, they have predominantly been vegetarian and vegan, will not use animal products in clothing,

furnishings, cosmetics, decorations, or in medicines. They have generally avoided professions and businesses in which any kind of known himsa to humans or non-humans are involved, despite the potential for profit or personal gain. They shun entertainments that involved the use or torture of animals. Because of this boundary, Jains have avoided professions such as agriculture, trading in leather, meat and meat related businesses and investments, the hotel industry (where serving meat and non-vegetarian products may be necessary), or several pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries that require use of animal based ingredients or testing on animals.

The “Three As” of Jains, Ahimsa, Anekant (non-absolutism), and Aprigraha (limiting possessions), guide the lifestyle of Jains. Not only are Jains vegetarians, but many Jains will not eat root vegetables (to avoid killing the entire plant) and not eat after sunset to avoid harm to many small insects during the night.

As traders and businessmen, Jains have generally observed the highest standards of ethics, honesty, and morality. In many cases, their verbal agreements were more solid and genuine than written agreements used at the time. They preserved and protected the environment and stayed away from businesses where deforestation, burning and polluting the earth, air, and water were involved.

Jains hardly ever started wars, but many times they were the first to enlist in the military to defend their country, its honor, and culture. Frequently, Jains and Jain monks permanently changed the minds and behaviors of rulers and military generals and encouraged movement from war and fighting to peace and ahimsa. Even the 15th century Muslim emperor Akbar issued royal proclamations to ban animal slaughter during the Jain holy days, based on his relationship with local Jains and monks and their influence on him. When 17th century emperor Shah Jahan was building his famous Red Fort in Delhi, he allotted a piece of land next door for use by Jains only to build their temple (called Lal Mandir) because all the Muslim emperors knew Jains as trustworthy and peace loving

people. Today, this Jain temple—still standing and in use — also houses and supports the a bird hospital for the treatment and care of injured and sick birds.

Surrounded by a majority Hindu community, Jains adopted several Hindu rituals to assimilate and live with them in harmony and peace. Even today, most Jain milestones, such as the birth of a child, marriage, or death ceremony, are conducted by Hindupurohits.

In India, Jains have been the biggest philanthropists (as part of the practice of ahimsa) by establishing thousands of animal and bird shelters, hospitals, leprosy centers, schools, orphan care centers, and by running free medical facilities, eye clinics, the famous Jaipur Foot for prostheses, and the donation of hearing aids, wheelchairs and clothing to the sick, handicapped, needy, and poor. They are generally one of the firsts to show up to help at natural disasters such as famines, earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. For example, many Jain doctors in North America travel to India and African countries every year to provide free medical care.

Given instant connectivity in communication, commerce, and travel today, the world has indeed become a global village. But this interconnectedness foregrounds many important issues involving pluralism, democracy, ecology, terrorism, violence, nationalism, human rights, disease prevention and treatment, and other health matters.

Also, complications that arise in areas of the environment, law, business, and medicine, (including organ transplant, cloning, stem cell research, genome research, abortion, and the spread of new diseases), food production, transport, space initiatives, and conflict at the local and global levels—all of these places of possibility and connection have created new environments. Unfortunately, some of these challenges are now shaking the very foundations of ahimsa within the Jain community—the very ahimsa they have treasured and preserved intact for several thousand years.

For more than five years, I have been speaking frequently with Professor Gary Francione, distinguished Professor of Law and Philosophy at Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA about practical ahimsa. Gary is not only a Jain but is also passionate about ahimsa. In July 2009, I had a chance to meet Gary for the first time. I spent three days with him at the JAINA convention in Los Angeles, California, where he gave a soul-searching keynote speech on ahimsa and ecology. In the same year in October, I listened to his keynote speech at the opening of JVB Preksha Meditation Center in Houston, Texas. Both of his speeches created waves of emotion in me. They, and the ensuing phone conversations with Gary, helped convince me that there is an ahimsa crisis. This book is a result of that sad realization.

Several other friends have kindled this fire within me—among them Narendra Sheth in San Diego, California, Pravin K. Shah in Raleigh, North Carolina, Fakirchand Dalal in the Washington, D.C. area, Dilip V. Shah, a past president of JAINA, and Professor Glenn Paige in Honolulu, Hawaii.

I was born and brought up in a religious, moral, and non-ritualistic Jain family near Delhi, India. I have also lived in the United Kingdom and the United States for the last 49 years. Since my twenties, I have been connected and intimately involved with a large number of Jain organizations and institutions in India, the US, the UK, France and Canada, either as a member, founder, co-founder, member of the executive committee, or chairman and president. I was the national secretary (four years) and president (four years) of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) as well. Throughout this work, ahimsa has remained central and North Star to my endeavors.

During my life, I have visited many Jain centers—not only in the aforementioned countries, but also in Dubai, Belgium, Singapore, Thailand, and Australia—and have participated in their varied activities and celebrations. I have been fortunate in meeting and interacting with practitioners from all four components of the Jain sangh (sadhus, sadhvis, shravaks,

and shravikas), Jain acharyas, Jain community leaders and also several hundred Jain youth throughout the world. I have observed firsthand the practice of ahimsa as a Jain and from within the Jain community. Most of my stories in this book come from India (that is where 98% of Jains live) but there are others that I have observed in the US and other places where I have been living for past many years.

This book is a recollection and compilation of many of my own observations, reflections, and reactions from these experiences and relationships. In addition, I have included some incidents that were told to me, or that I learned from the media. I believe the stories are correct, though I cannot vouch for their complete accuracy. It may very well be that what I heard or observed may not be what actually had happened. But I want to assure readers that I have not intentionally made up any of these stories, and all of them speak to what I have learned, and what observations I have to offer about the importance of ahimsa.

In this book, I have tried to cover the topics of himsa and its practices, which consist largely of items we put in our mouths (food, drink, medicine) but also deal with issues beyond *thali* (our food plate). The majority of the book deals with macro (*stbhooh*) issues of himsa as opposed to micro (*sooksham*) himsa towards all five-sensed life forms—human and animal.

The terms “non-vegetarian” and “vegetarian” refer to what is on one’s food plate—that is, what one puts in one’s stomach through the mouth. A non-vegetarian’s food plate contains flesh of any living being that moves, swims, or crawls. A vegetarian does not eat flesh of animals, fish, or poultry but may or may not eat eggs and dairy products. Beyond these two food habits there is another life style called veganism. Veganism, as a terminology and a lifestyle, refers to those who use no animal or animal-based products for food, medicine, clothing, body beautification or decoration.

In this book I have moved beyond these three lifestyles to discuss the *ahimsak* (completely nonviolent) way of life, which includes not only veganism but also ahimsa beyond food and

adornments. An “Ahimsak Way of Life” (AWOL) practitioner strives to practice ahimsa in everything, consistently, both inside and outside the temple or place of worship.

The bottom-line message of this book is to encourage the reader to become and live as an ahimsak—this is something to which we all must aspire. I am not at all saying that being a practitioner of ahimsa only up to the level of thali is bad, but we should not *stop* there. We all must go beyond thali. Living an ahimsak way of life, I submit, is practical and also truly Jain.

In this book, I have also emphasized the phrase “*you decide*,” quite repeatedly. Here, I am not at all defining or laying down a code of conduct for each and every Jain to follow. On the contrary, the practice of ahimsa and the extent to which one follows it is always an individual choice that depends upon one’s own circumstances, place, time, and geography. That is why I have used the phrase “you decide” to emphasize that it is your choice and not someone else’s absolute dictum.

I am compelled to write this book because I feel that the practice of ahimsa is slipping within the Jain community. We must take hold of ahimsa again and help the philosophy and practice of ahimsa to flourish everywhere —within Jainism and beyond —to the wider world. That way, we will have many Mahatma Gandhis all around us!

A few final words of introduction: Please note that most of my reflections are about himsa committed by human beings to other human beings as well as to other five-sensed non-humans. Only a small portion of my stories in this book pertain to creatures that have fewer than five senses.

Please note that this book is not intended to be an academic work. It is simply a narrative by one individual with inquisitive eyes and a reflective mind.

For the sake of simplicity I will use the words “he,” “him,” and “his” rather than “he/she” and “his/her” but keep in mind that I mean both men and women.

In this book, I draw upon many real stories, case studies, and observations I have made during my time in India and in North America. The use of stories and case studies is a powerful technique frequently employed by preachers and professors. In fact, one major category of Jain literature is called *Kathaanyog* (meaning “full of stories and happenings”). Stories and case studies convey a message much more clearly and effectively than does a theoretical text, because readers can relate incidents and events to their own lives.

In the following pages, I frequently mention myself, my relatives, and my close friends, but not because of vanity. Some of the stories I share are very personal and intimate. I do not mean for them to sound self-serving and arrogant on my part or accusatory or condemning of others. I am no paragon of perfection in thought, word, or deed. Like all of my fellow humans, I have flaws, weaknesses, and shortcomings. And I have committed much himsa, though mostly unwittingly and out of ignorance. But upon learning of my mistakes, I have constantly and as humanly possible, strived to change, make amends, and apologize for committing himsa.

I am not a successful role model, either. Despite frequent discussions about ahimsa, I have not influenced even a single person in my own household to become vegan or a follower of the broader aspects of ahimsa.

Interestingly, the one person I recall upon whom my words have had an effect is a non-Jain. About five years ago, I was visiting with a classmate from my college days in India. During our conversation, he told me that he is a vegetarian and eats meat rarely. I responded, “Either one is pregnant or not pregnant. There is no such thing as half-pregnant or partially pregnant.” He thought about it and after a few days called me to say that he has decided to become fully vegetarian.

Yes, it was easy to preach to him. But it is harder to walk the walk myself. Since I am vegan only 95% of the time, I cannot claim to be a complete vegan either. I am trying to be, but sometimes my willpower weakens. I don’t let my downfalls

discourage me. I pick myself up and keep walking on my journey toward observance of ahimsa in all aspects of my life.

Whether the stories are mine or from other sources, all are reflections of how ahimsa is practiced—or not practiced—within the Jain community today. Readers may find some of the stories gruesome, but rest assured that they are not fabricated or exaggerated. I apologize for not naming all of my sources; sometimes I have forgotten the name, other times it is best left unsaid.

While writing this book, I sought the views of some of my friends about what I was writing. Quite a few were disappointed that my book was not about ahimsa as a philosophy. They were expecting a theoretical and academic book and not this critical and honest reflection. Several other friends warned me that many Jains will feel hurt and may even accuse me of seeking to injure their feelings. In fact, they advised me either not to write this book at all or that I should write something “feel good.”

However, I feel strongly about ahimsa and what is happening within my Jain sangh. This is not healthy. I feel hurt and that is the impetus of this book.

If some readers feel hurt by anything I have written, that will amount to himsa on my part. I sincerely say to them “michchhami dukhadam,” (I ask for unconditional forgiveness). If, on the other hand, this book fosters open, honest, rational, and critical discussions within the Jain community, I will feel myself very blessed.

I trust readers will reflect on the message and not on the messenger.

Thank you, Jai Jinendra, and Dhanyavaad.

Sulekh C. Jain,

Houston, Texas, USA

December, 2014

AN OVERVIEW OF AHIMSA

अहिंसार्थाय भूतानाम् For protection of all lives
धर्मप्रवचनम् कृतम्। Religion is taught to us.
यः स्यादहिंसासंयुक्तः Therefore Ahimsa is
स धर्म इति निश्चयः॥ Essential part of religion.
(Source: Great Indian Epic Mahabhabarta)

I'd like to begin this chapter with a poem on ahimsa written by a ten-year-old Jain girl in San Diego, USA.

I want to be Jain
I want to feed the hungry
I want to wipe the tears of the sad
I want to give to the needy
I want to be Jain...
I want to push all the anger out of my heart
I want to make room for forgiveness instead
I want to ask for forgiveness for bad things I may have done
I want to be Jain...
I want animals to live and be free
I want people to understand animals are like us
I don't want to use them for my needs
I want to be Jain...

I don't want to lie or cheat
I don't want to take advantage of others
I want to be honest and truthful
I want to be Jain...
I don't want to insist that I am correct
There are more than one right answers to a question
If I don't insist I am right, there will be no fights
I want to be a Jain...
Bhagwaan Mahavir
Let me walk on your path
The path that took you to liberation
Let it take me there too
Let me spread love, peace and joy
Oh how I want to be Jain...oh how I want to be Jain!!!

—Rutvi Shah, - age 10 - San Diego, USA

JAINISM: A LIVING TRADITION

Jainism, an ancient religion originating from India- along with Hinduism and Buddhism- is an integral part of India. The Jain tradition, which enthroned the philosophy of ecological harmony and non-violence as its lodestar, flourished for centuries side-by-side with other schools of thought in ancient India. It formed a vital part of the mainstream of ancient Indian life, contributing greatly to its philosophical, artistic and political heritage. During certain periods of Indian history, many ruling elites as well as large sections of the population were Jains.

Although the eight to ten million Jains estimated to live in modern India, constituting a tiny fraction of its population, the message and motifs of the Jain perspective, its unconditional reverence for life in all forms, and its commitment to the progress of human civilization and to the preservation of the natural environment, continue to have a profound and

pervasive influence on Indian life and its outlook. Jainism, with its distinctive views on matters such as non-violence and intellectual relativity, has relevance to the life and thought of not only of this century but also for many centuries to come.

Jainism has succeeded in maintaining its identity and integrity as a separate system in the midst of preponderant Hinduism. Jainism is a complete system with all necessary branches such as ontology, metaphysics, philosophy, epistemology, ethics, and rituals. It has its own scriptures, temples (architecturally, some of the most beautiful temples in India are the Jain temples) and deities, places of worship and pilgrimage, and its own festivals and fairs. The organized religious group (Sangha) consists of ascetics and householders of both genders.

Jainism was not founded by any one individual. It is a philosophy, which developed over a long period of time and then acquired its own distinctive status within the broad Indian system. Its last spiritual propounder, Lord Mahavira, was a contemporary of Lord Buddha and more than 2500 years ago he lived in the same Indian state of modern Bihar, as did Lord Buddha. Lord Mahavira's teachings exerted a very strong influence on Indian thought and way of life.(source, Late Dr. L. M Singhvi).

It is worth mentioning here that in the year 2001, Jains the world over celebrated the 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira (he was the 24th Tirthankar. The 23rd, Lord Parshavanatha, was 250 years before him and the 22nd, Lord Neminatha, a contemporary of Lord Krishna of the Hindus, was at least two thousand years before the 23rd Tirthankar).

The Sanskrit word “Jain” means the followers of *Jinas*—those who conquered their selves by conquering their own inner enemies and passions of anger, greed, ego, deceit, attachment, aversion, hatred...and attained complete perfection and omniscience. Jainism is well known in India, but because of its non- proselytizing (noncoversio) nature, it is relatively much less known outside India although its principles of non-violence and intellectual relativity are quite well recognized. In

the twentieth century, the most vibrant and illustrious example of Jain influence was that of Mahatma Gandhi, acclaimed as the Father of the Indian Nation. Gandhi's spiritual mentor and friend, Shrimad Rajchandra, was a Jain. The two great men corresponded, until Rajchandra's death, on issues of faith and ethics. The central Jain teaching of ahimsa (non-violence) was the guiding principle of Gandhi's civil disobedience in the cause of freedom and social equality. His ecological philosophy found apt expression in his observation that the greatest work of humanity could not match the smallest wonder of nature.

The essence of Jainism is concern for the welfare of every being in the universe and for the health of the universe itself. To that end:

- Jains believe that animals and plants, as well as human beings, contain living souls. Each of these souls is considered of equal value and should be treated with respect and compassion.
- Jains are vegetarians and live in a way that minimizes their use of the world's resources.
- Jains believe in reincarnation and seek to attain ultimate liberation - which means escaping the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth so that the immortal soul lives forever in a state of bliss.
- Liberation is achieved by eliminating all karmas from the soul.
- Jainism is a religion of self-help.
- There are no gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings.
- The three guiding principles of Jainism, also known as the "three jewels," include right/rational belief, right/rational knowledge and right/rational conduct.
- The supreme principle of Jainway of living is non-violence (ahimsa).

- Ahimsa is one of the five mahavratas (the five great vows). The other mahavratas are non-attachment to possessions, not lying, not stealing, and sexual restraint (with celibacy as the ideal).
- Jains understand that 2600 years ago, Lord Mahavira gave Jainism its present-day form.
- The texts containing the teachings of Mahavira are called the *Agamas*.
- Jains are divided into two major sects; the Digambara (meaning “sky clad”) sect and the Shvetambara (meaning “white clad”) sect. This distinction refers to the clothing of the sadhus; no clothes or white clothes respectively.
- Jainism has no pujaris or purohits. Its spiritual and religious people are monks and nuns, who lead strict and ascetic lives.

Source: BBC web site.

Ahimsa (nonviolence) is the central part of Jainism. Ahimsa means the absence of the desire to injure or kill and a disinclination to do harm. It also means both mental and physical concern for the welfare of others; humans and non-humans.

In the following pages we will describe the relationship between Ahimsa and Jainism and its unique foundation.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN AHIMSA AND JAINISM

Nearly 2,600 years ago, Lord Mahavira laid down a very specific and detailed code of conduct for Jain laity in regard to the practice of ahimsa in their daily lives. He also, through his own self-practice, preaching and practical demonstrations, strongly objected and revolted against the prevalent practices of himsa (violence) in many customs and traditions of the day. These included animal sacrifices in religious rituals;

slavery; societal discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, and economic status; and pollution and destruction of the environment. Lord Mahavira made ahimsa the centerpiece of his sermons and of his fourfold Sangh (community).

This concept of unconditional ahimsa towards all life forms is the most profound contribution of Jains to India and to the world. In India, the ahimsa of the Jains has played a significant role in shaping many customs and traditions, one of them being vegetarianism.

As Dr. Atul Shah, chief editor of the London-based *Jain Spirit* said, “For Jains, Ahimsa is an everyday word. However, for many people, violence is an everyday experience. They would not think twice about arguing with someone or even having a fight. Many do not care how or where their food comes from—they seem to be angry all the time. A non-vegetarian diet is the norm and vegetables the exception. The message of Ahimsa is quite remote from their day-to-day life. Many of these people have not experienced genuine love—ever. To them, it is normal to argue. And the modern world of greed and materialism exacerbates this violence.” (Reference Add)

As the centerpiece of Jainism, ahimsa is the *aatmaa* (soul) — it is the only vehicle (means) to cross this ocean of *Samsara* (worldly existence). (Reference Add)

In reality, ahimsa and Jainism are two sides of the same coin. Jainism stands on the pillar of ahimsa. Prof. Gary Francione of Rutgers University defines ahimsa as “staying in equanimity” (*samyaktva bhaav*) and notes that any step away from equanimity is himsa or can be understood as walking towards himsa. Himsa (violence) refers to any action accompanied by the giving of pain or rise of passions, whereas ahimsa is about not inflicting harm and pain to one’s self or others in thoughts, words, or actions.

In Jain cosmology, animals also possess a moral and spiritual dimension. A favorite Jain tale relates to an elephant, the leader of a large herd, caught in a raging forest fire. Seeking

shelter, all animals crowded around a lake, leaving no room for him to maneuver. After a while, the elephant raised one leg to scratch himself, and a small hare/rabbit swiftly occupied this tiny vacancy. Feeling deep compassion for the small animal, the elephant kept his leg raised for more than three days until the fire died out and the hare/rabbit departed. By then, his leg had gone numb; he toppled over, unable to set his foot down and walk again. Maintaining purity of mind until he died, the elephant severed all ties with his animal destinies. He was later reborn as Prince Megha, son of King Srenika of Magadha, and became an eminent Jain monk under Lord Mahavira.

This is the essence of ahimsa in Jaina philosophy—it is compassion, empathy, a profound wisdom that a common *Atman* pulsates in all beings, making each equally worthy of life, and denying the human-made hierarchy that sets a human or more-powerful mammal above a creature that it has the power to kill. Ahimsa is not a passive or mechanical act of merely refraining from an act of violence; it is a proactive affirmation of divinity in all creation.

According to Jainism, true religion is that which sustains all species of life and helps to maintain harmonious relationship among them. The entirety of Jain ethics tends towards translating the principle of ahimsa into practice.

For Jains, their identity and trademark is ahimsa and that is what differentiates them from non-Jains.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES A JAIN FROM A NON-JAIN?

The truth of the matter is that Jains don't have a monopoly in having a rich history and culture, and in serving the public good. Many other religions and religious communities have similar attributes and contributions.

Jains tend to be affluent, but so are many other members of communities of faith. Jain sadhus lead an austere way of life, but there are also similar ascetics in many other faith traditions.

Jains emphasize yoga, meditation, and fasting. Yet here, too, one can find identical practices in non-Jain traditions as well.

Like many non-Jains, some Jains also worship idols. Similarly, like many other non-Jains, some Jains also believe in the existence of some kind of supernatural power, which many religions call “God.”

Outwardly, nearly all Jains with an Indian ethnic background have facial features, complexions, dress habit, and celebrations of all major life events similar to most other inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent.

So, what is the distinguishing mark of a Jain? Nothing really. There is no identifiable, unique attribute possessed by a Jain. Jains are like everybody else.

But, if one has to point to the single most notable attribute of a Jain, it would surely be ahimsa. Ahimsa not in talk, not in slogan, not in worship, but ahimsa in continuous practice, inside and outside the temple and places of worship, and as a way of life and all the time. Ahimsa should be the nature (*savabhaava*), conduct and character of a Jain. Only when one is practicing ahimsa can one be called a Jain. Ahimsa is the core, the identity, the religion, and the ornament of a Jain. Being a Jain is more than a title relating to religious identity. It signifies that the person believes in ahimsa and practices ahimsa in his journey of life. So, to that end:

...a Jain is the one who is a true symbol of nonviolence, love, compassion, peace, harmony, and oneness with all. Ahimsa is likened to compassion, the ability to feel for another's suffering. A Jain is one who feels the pain of others and actively and proactively does his very best to reduce or alleviate that pain.

Ahimsa, this core philosophy of Jains, cannot be fully understood without first understanding the nature and the role that *Karma doctrine* plays. According to Jain philosophy, ahimsa and karmas are inter-related and hence a clear understanding of the two and their co-destiny or interdependence is essential.

Jains believe that himsa is the sole cause of the inflow, binding, and increasing of the karmic load and only ahimsa leads to the stopping and shedding—and thus the reduction of the karmic load. Now we will turn in earnest to karma and its mechanisms—ahimsa or himsa.

FOUR STAGES OF KARMAS

In Jain philosophy, significant emphasis is given to the four stages of karma. These include:

- Inflow (the incoming movement) of karma, called *Asrava*,
- Binding of karma, called *Bandha*,
- Stoppage of the inflow of karma, called *Samvar*, and
- Annihilation or destruction of karma, called *Nirjara*.

All un-liberated (mundane) souls are bound by karmas. The quantity and intensity of the binding and quality of karmas (karmic load) depend upon one's own actions in life.

Karma can be likened to a dust storm around a house. As soon as the window of the house is opened, the dust particles start coming in. This is *asrava* or inflow. The quantity, intensity, and quality of incoming dust particles is now controlled by the speed of the incoming particles, how much of the window is open, for how long and whether the window has some kind of wire screen on it or not.

Now the dust particles stick and accumulate onto the floors and walls of the house. This is *Bandha*, or binding or attachment. After a while the window is closed slightly or completely. Then, the inflow of the dust is either reduced or completely stopped. This is called *samvar* (stoppage). Now, the owner of the house takes a vacuum cleaner and removes all or some of the dust particles. This is called *nirjara* (annihilation or destruction), or reducing the karmic load of the particles.

Himsa is the cause of *asrava* (influx) of papa (bad or sinful) karma and ahimsa is the path to punya (good deeds) and *samvar* (stoppage of inflow) of karma.

This world (*samsara*) is comprised of two major entities: living matter (*jiva*) and nonliving matter (*ajiva*). The latter has no life at all. In the act of himsa, the perpetrator and the sufferer are always the *jiva*, not the *ajiva*, though it's possible that nonliving matter (*ajiva*) may be used by the *jiva* as a means to perform himsa. However, it is certain that, on its own, nonliving matter (*ajiva*) does not commit himsa, except when assisted by natural forces such as gravity, wind, water, heat, or light, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, for example, in which *jivas* may be harmed or killed. The difference between the two is that in natural calamities, the *jivas* are affected (and hence suffer), but the doer (the earthquake, for example) has no motive or intention to cause pain and suffering to others.

A soul attracts and binds *karmas* with other souls and living matter only and not with non-living matter (*ajiva* or *pudgal*). But in this binding, one may use the help of non-living matter as a means or mechanism to do himsa to one's self or to other souls.

The following diagram shows the mechanism through which one soul (*jiva*), due to its transactions, attracts and binds

WHO AM I?

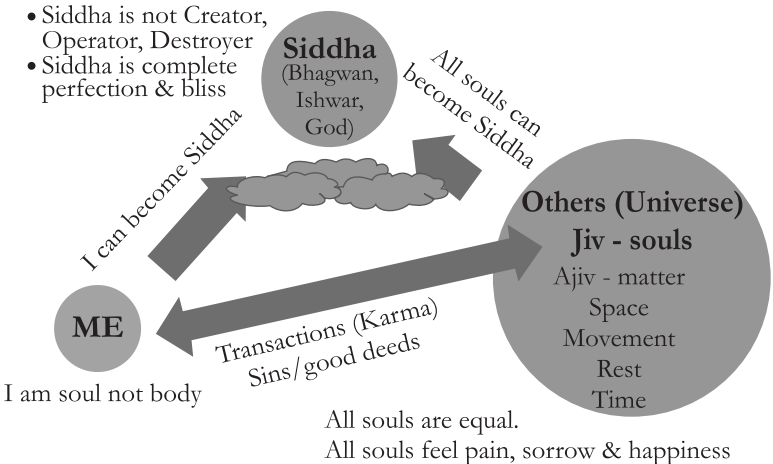
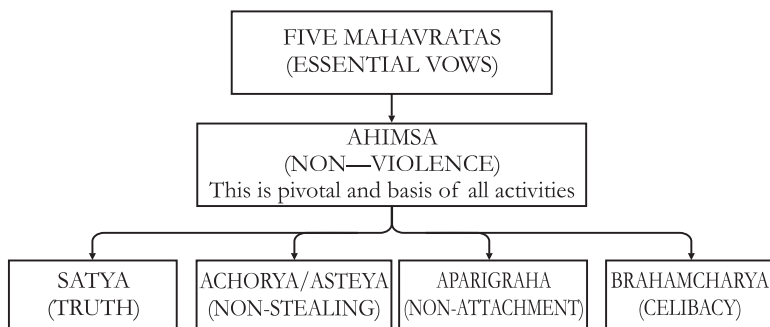


Figure shows "Me," in relationship with others and with those whom I bind *karmas*

karmas with other souls (jivas) only but not with non-living matter (pudgal).

In Jainism, to practice minimum himsa, all sadhus (monks) and sadhvis (nuns) take five great vows, called mahavratas. Similarly, all lay people are advised and supposed to take five small vows, called anuvratas, plus seven additional vratas (siksha vratas) for a total of twelve vows.

In theory, both mahavratas and anuvratas are the same except a difference in the emphasis on practice of ahimsa. These five vows are: ahimsa (nonviolence), satya (not telling lies), aprigraha (non-possession and non-attachment), achorya (not stealing) and brahmacharya (celibacy). If we look closely at these five vows, we will see that ahimsa is the core of each and also the most fundamental and pivotal vow. The other four are sub-categories and are hence subordinate to the first vow in the practice of ahimsa. Ahimsa is the means—like a boat—to crossing the ocean of samsara. Without the utmost practice of ahimsa, one cannot get rid of accumulated karmas; in fact, one cannot even stop the inflow of new karmas. The other four vows are like the engine, oars, or sails helping the boat move, propelling its progress across the ocean.



THE FIVE ESSENTIAL VOWS THAT BRING ABOUT AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

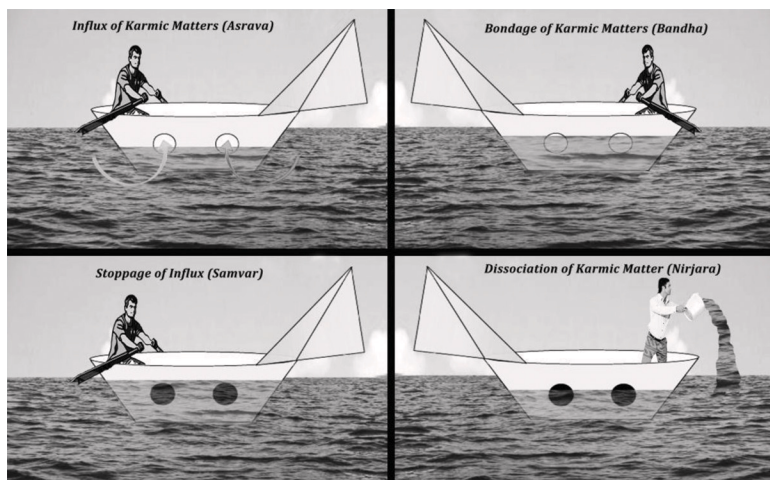
For Jains, the guiding slogan and motto is “ahimsa parmo-dharama,” which means that ahimsa is the supreme religion, that is, there is no greater religion than ahimsa.

The following famous aphorism from Jain scriptures sums it all:

“Dhammo mangal mukkittham, ahimsa sanj-mo-tavo, deva vitam naman-santi, jass-dhamme saya mano.”

This means, “that which is nonviolence, self-restraint, and austerity is dharma” (spiritual values). It is by virtue of spiritual values that supreme spiritual beneficence results. To him whose mind is absorbed in spiritual values even gods pay homage (Saman Suttam-82).

In this sutra/aphorism, ahimsa, sanyam (restraint) and tapah (penance) are mentioned as the three most auspicious virtues. Using again the metaphor of ahimsa as a flawless boat sailing smoothly on the water, it is obvious that as soon as himsa is committed, the boat gets a hole in its bottom and starts leaking and accumulating water and thus sinking. As soon as sanyam (restraint) is applied, the occurrence and magnitude of himsa is reduced, the hole starts becoming smaller, and less and less water seeps in. With further restraints (we can imagine applying the brakes fully), the hole in the boat is completely plugged and no more water leaks in. Now, by doing penance (tapah), the accumulated water is thrown out of the boat. Here tapah is like a bucket used to throw away the accumulated water.



PICTURE OF A BOAT, a popular metaphor explaining the cycle of Karmas

In Acarangsutra it is said, “ahimsa is pure and eternal.” The concept of nonviolence is not restricted to human beings but can be embraced by the whole universe. Nonviolence is observed by Jain practitioners as a rule of nature. Abstinence from harming or killing others must be observed in thought, word, and deed. The mere thought of hurting or killing is as immoral as actually killing. Hence, according to Jains, the principle of ahimsa implies purity of thought, word, and deed, actuated by universal love and mercy. There are 106 types of violence, as analyzed in Jainism. What is important to note is that Jain ahimsa is extended equally towards human and sub-human life. Ahimsa reverences not only mankind but all organic life.

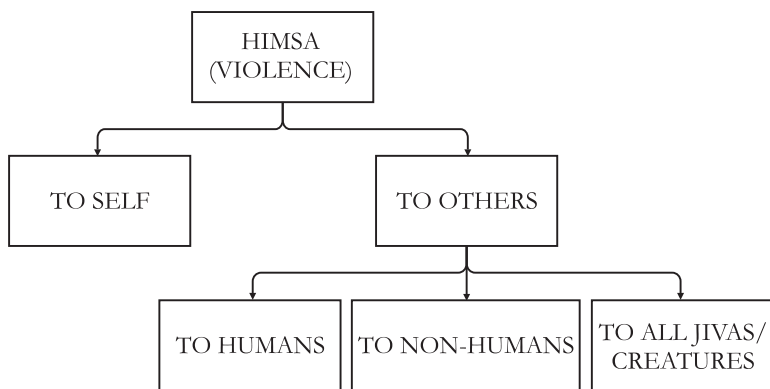
There are many terms that define ahimsa—not just nonviolence, but also compassion, not injuring, not hurting, not harming, not interfering, not disturbing, and not killing, as well as the Sanskrit words karuna, anukampa, and daya. But none of these terms come close to defining the magnitude and full impact of ahimsa.

An eminent American professor once commented that the Hippocratic oath, which medical doctors take during graduation, is based on ahimsa. Similarly, the Jain concept of paras-prop-graho-jivanam (all life forms are bound together and dependent on each other for their support) gave rise to the whole ecological movement.

Surely there are hundreds of similar practical, cultural, and philosophical examples showing how Jainism and its philosophy of ahimsa have shaped many traditions and practices in the conduct of business, justice, medicine, and other disciplines.

The spark of himsa starts in the mind, which, if not controlled, becomes a fire in speech and, if still not controlled, becomes an inferno by the time it reaches the stage of action.

It is important to note that while mental himsa affects only oneself, verbal and physical himsa affect both one’s self and others, directly and indirectly.



HOW HIMSA (VIOLENCE) AFFECTS SELF AND OTHER LIVING BEINGS

Ahimsa is not only the supreme religion or virtue but is also the only motto or identity of a spiritual person. Without the practice of ahimsa, one cannot be a practitioner of spirituality.

The one who follows ahimsa (including householders and mendicants, sadhu, sadhvi, shravak and shravika) is called *ahimsak*. An ahimsak not only believes in ahimsa but also actively and proactively practices and lives by ahimsa in his daily living, moment by moment.

Some form of himsa in life is unavoidable. But an ahimsak is always mindful, practices ahimsa with utmost care and due diligence, and strives to find an alternative to minimize himsa continuously, in all circumstances and ways. For an ahimsak, ahimsa is the only way of life and he constantly strives to avoid harm to any living being by thoughts, speech, or actions. Such a code of conduct can then be called the Ahimsak Way of Life, or AWOL.

All jivas (life forms) have in common four essential traits; these include: hunger, reproduction, sleep, and fear. Only humans have the freedom to make a choice of what kind of food to eat (with minimum of himsa) or what kinds of clothing to wear (again, with minimum of himsa). All nonhuman life forms (jivas who have from one sense up to five senses) don't have as much freedom of choice. They operate in these four essential areas based on natural instinct and need.

An act of himsa by a jiva can be divided into two categories; the act is either a natural habit, or instinct, such as a carnivorous animal (predators) killing other jiva for food, or a choice, in which the chooser and doer of himsa is generally a human being.

In this samsara, human beings cause the greatest himsa because they choose to cause himsa. They are not required or forced to commit himsa through either habit or natural predisposition. The reason human beings cause himsa for food is that they choose to kill other jivas. Humans also have choice to refrain from killing and thus to live a healthy life by consuming only plant-based foods. Generally, only humans hoard, enslave others, engage in wars, destroy the environment, kill and rape for pleasure, commit assaults, terrorize others, or participate in trafficking of other beings. No other species does such things and thus cause such massive amounts of himsa, all by choice.

HIMSA COMMITTED BY A HUMAN AGENT

ACTION	HUMAN HARMED?	NON-HUMAN HARMED?
To enslave	Yes	Yes
Torture	Yes	Yes
Human trafficking	Yes	Yes
Vivisection in medical and other scientific training	Yes	Yes
Labor	Yes	Yes
Prostitution and sexual assault	Yes	Yes
Capital punishment	Yes	Yes
Legal penalties; prisons	Yes	Yes
Agriculture	Yes	Yes
Discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, or other factors	Yes	No
Religious and cultural customs and celebrations	Yes	Yes
Genocide	Yes	Yes

For food	No	Yes
For transport of goods	Some	Yes
For medicines	No	Yes
For beauty aids	No	Yes
For furnishings and decorations	No	Yes
For clothing	No	Yes
For testing of machines, chemicals	No	Yes
Hunting	No	Yes
For recreation and entertainment	Some	Yes
In wars and battles	Yes	Yes
Ingredients in food and chemicals	No	Yes
In damage to the environment	Yes	Yes
Rodeo, cock and dog fighting, bull runs	No	Yes
In the circus	Yes	Yes

Now that we have established that ahimsa is the most humane and essential part of survival for the human race, we will now examine the history of ahimsa and its foundation.

HISTORY OF AHIMSA

The doctrine of ahimsa was founded by Eastern teachers several millennia ago. Almost all thinkers and founders of religious orders universally accept ahimsa as a core principle of human conduct. Though truth-seekers like Mahavira, Buddha, and Jesus Christ, philosophers like Lhotse and Confucius, and stalwarts like Pythagoras were separated by geographical boundaries, their work speaks to the eternality of truth. In Jainism in particular, nonviolence is considered a supreme moral virtue (ahimsa parmo dharma).

An analysis of the different religions and philosophies of India and perhaps the whole world shows that the sramana tradition—of which Jainism and Buddhism are two religious expressions emanating from almost the same place and time in India—describes ahimsa/ nonviolence as the heart of the doctrine to eliminate pain. A further analysis shows that Lord Mahavira, a few years senior to Buddha and the latest Ford-

maker of Jainism, experienced and envisioned the subtlest form of nonviolence and thus made it the very heart of all his doctrines, ethics, and spiritual practices. He defined ahimsa/ nonviolence in the first limb of Jain canons, known as Acaranga, as follows:

“I so pronounce that all omniscient lords of all times state, speak, propagate, and elaborate that nothing which breathes, which exists, which lives, and which has any essence or potential of life, should be destroyed, or ruled, or subjugated, or harmed, or denied of its essence or potential.” He further said, *“That which you consider destroying or disciplining or harming or subjugating or killing is [like] yourself. The results of your actions have to be borne by you, so do not destroy anything.”*

The above doctrine, preached by Mahavira, is based on the eternal truth that “the nature of all living beings is to be happy, peaceful, and enjoy bliss.” Put another way, nonviolence is our very nature.

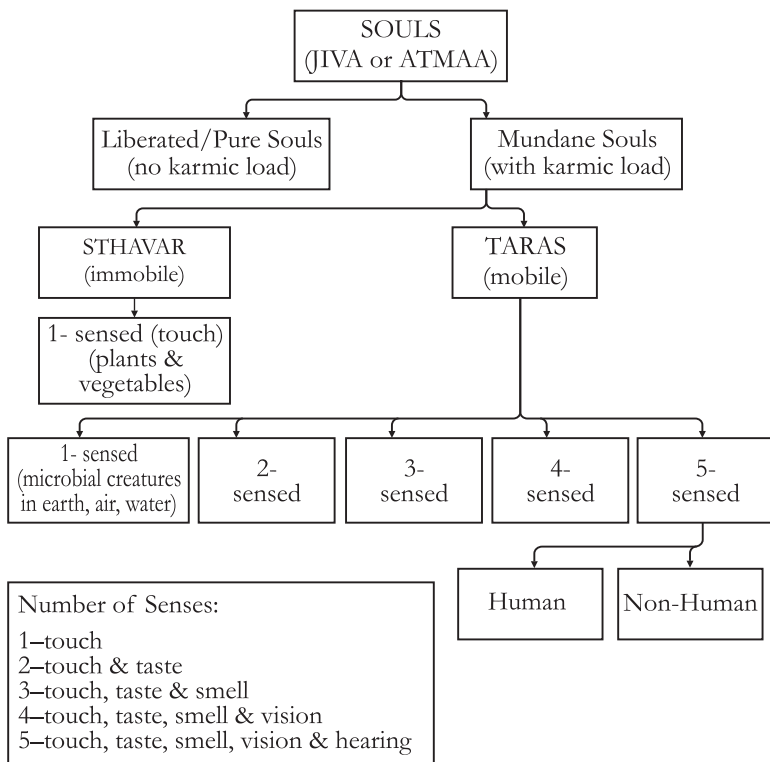
Convergent validation for this thesis of non-killing, and its ontological nature, can be found in the first global survey of deaths by suicide, homicide, and war, conducted by the World Health Organization. The survey concludes that “violence is a preventable disease.”*

Later, in the tenth limb of Jain canons known as Prasna Vyakarana, Mahavira explained the practice of nonviolence in social activities by using sixty-four synonyms, such as kindness (dayā), compassion (anukampā), security (rakṣā), salutariness (kallāṇa), fearlessness (abhaya), non-killing (amādhā), equanimity (samatā), forgiveness (kṣamā), service (sevā), friendship (maitrī), pity (dayā), tolerance, and so on. This wide variety of synonyms speaks to the many possible manifestations of ahimsa in daily life.

To further explain his doctrine of nonviolence, Mahavira, in an unprecedented way, classified living beings in two primary

6 “World Report on Violence and Health,” World Health Organization, last accessed September 5, 2013 http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2002/9241545615_eng.pdf

classes: pure/liberated soul (having no karmic load) and impure /mundane soul (having karmic loads). He further sub-classified impure souls into six subtypes according to their bodies. The two primary classes are:

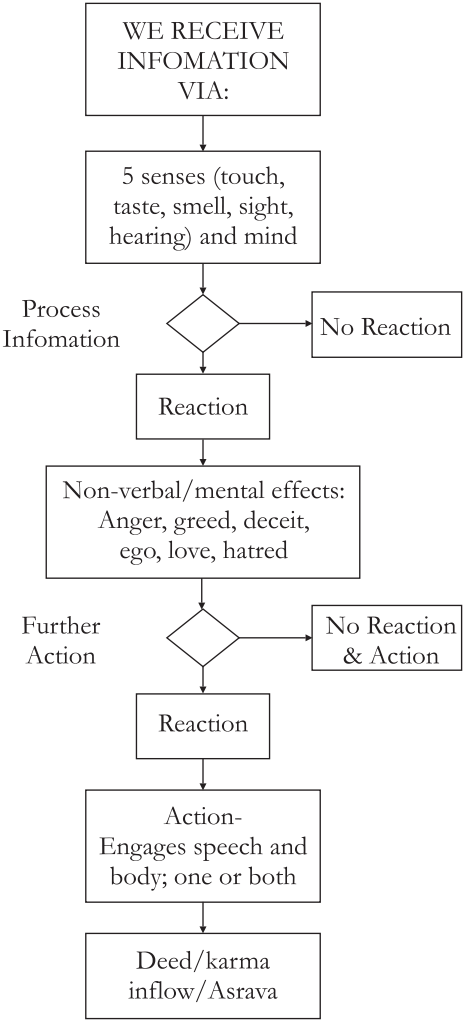


1. *Sthavara*, or immobile, living beings that cannot move on their own to achieve their objectives, such as their need for air, water, or fire. This category includes one-sensed beings. All vegetation, plants, and trees belong to this category.
2. *Trasa*, or mobile, living beings who can move on their own to achieve their objectives. The beings in this category, from ants to humans, can have two-to-five types of sense organs.

Today, contribution by the sciences to ecology and various conservancy policies and practices can be considered a direct corollary to Mahavira's definitions of ahimsa and living

beings. The self-rejuvenating nature of air and water, and their recovery from certain levels of pollution are based on the concept of these resources being living entities. Accepting this definition of our natural surroundings is of immense use in achieving ahimsa.

At the spiritual level, Jains have equated violence with sin, which is considered the greatest cause of karmic bondage and



HOW WE REACT TO INFORMATION AND HOW THIS AFFECTS KARMA

which results in transmigration and the pains associated with it. Hence, when I commit violence against someone else, the first person to be hurt is me, as I bind bad (sinful) karmas immediately.

Further violence originates in and is committed at the mental level the moment we start scheming. Mental violence is manifested either through speech or bodily actions, or both. When we start planning violence, we experience its immediate effect in enhanced blood pressure, stress, and loss of control of our senses. It is then committed either directly, by our own activities of mind, body, and speech, or indirectly, when we condone and inspire others who are performing violent acts.

Ahimsa is the only golden thread that runs through all religions. Most religions differ from one another in all manner of doctrines and definitions, from the definition of divinity and question of who holds divine natures, to the question of whether life exists after death. Despite these disparities, all religions emphasize a strong, common thread: ahimsa, nonviolence, compassion, karuna, peace, and love. The details and degree of ahimsa may differ from one religion to another, but as a principle they all agree. Thus, ahimsa unites all religions.

THE BASIS OF AHIMSA IN JAINISM

In Jainism, ahimsa is the basis for the fundamental right of the existence of all life forms (jiva). According to Jainism, we must each remember, “I am a soul, not a body. I am eternal, constant and pure. All around me in this universe (irrespective of what life form/shape one is), every single living being, big and small, human and non-human, plant and organism, has a soul just like me. All souls are eternal. Each soul is independent and individual. All souls are spiritually equal to one another. Each soul has the same inherent attributes of infinite knowledge, infinite perception and infinite consciousness. All souls want to live in peace and happiness. Each soul has the same feelings for happiness and suffering. No soul wants or desires suffering.

All souls have the same rights to live peacefully and undisturbed as I do. Since all souls are just like me and have the same rights and privileges as I do, I have no right to harm, kill, torture, disturb or interfere in any way in the life and existence of another soul.”

This respect for the equality of every single living thing forms the basis of ahimsa. Because ahimsa is the highest attribute and the greatest religion, the Jainism’s most fundamental motto is **“live and help others to live.”**

Jains envision the broad and all-encompassing definition of ahimsa as follows:

*“Mentally, verbally, physically,
Directly, indirectly, knowingly, unknowingly,
Intentionally, and unconditionally,
Not by self, not through others (engage or ask others) and
Not condone or provide support to others in any shape or form
To injure, harm, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, discriminate, torment,
persecute, torture or kill,
Any creature or living being (humans and non-humans) however so small,
Is nonviolence (ahimsa).”*

In addition to this all-encompassing definition of ahimsa, there are many others. For example, these include: “[the] non-severance of vitalities (pranas) of self or others is Ahimsa.”

Similarly, compassion (karuna) is defined as “developing fellow feelings or distress at the suffering of other living beings.” In other words, to consider another’s suffering as your own is compassion.

Ahimsa has many connotations. When we say “ahimsa,” we generally think of not killing or not hurting others through words or actions. But this is perhaps only ten percent of the fullness of ahimsa. Like a glacier, most of its meaning is initially hidden.

When seeking to define ahimsa, Tulsi, a Jain Acharya and 20th century social reformer, described three conditions that must be met, Tulsi exhorts;

“First, do not kill or hurt any living being, mentally, verbally or by actions, even to the extent of not inspiring others who commit himsa. Second, extend equanimity towards all living beings. Positive values such as respect, love, kindness, and compassion towards all are included in this. Third, be vigilant.”

The first two occur when another being is involved. The third is internal. Whatever the time of the day, whether living in solitude or in a group, whether asleep or awake, there must be self-awareness. Whatever we do, we should do knowingly, said Acharya Tulsi. All our actions, our words, and our emotions should be positive; this is ahimsa.

The first condition is a “do not.” The other two conditions are “do” commands. A combination of all three is a complete definition of ahimsa, or nonviolence. Being an ahimsak (non-violent) is symbolized by inner harmony and is an accomplishment in itself. All other triumphs will naturally follow.

The definition and necessity of ahimsa is absolute, universal, unconditional, and eternal. There are no loopholes. The definition of ahimsa is not subject to different interpretations to suit the convenience and circumstances of a practitioner.

Professor Padmanabh Jaini calls ahimsa the “central concept of Jaina ethics.”⁷ While all Indian philosophical schools attach great importance to this concept, “none has carried it to the extreme of the Jainas. For them it is not simply the first among virtues but the virtue; all other restraints are simply elaborations of this central one.” By practicing ahimsa, Jains hope to avoid both deliberate as well as accidental injury to all other living beings. The practice of ahimsa is the first step,

7. Padmanabh S. Jain, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998), 8-9.

but Jains also hope that attitudinal changes will accompany practice. A practitioner hopes to reach a state of consciousness where he realizes that he is not his possessions, his body, or even his mental states. Moreover, a new awareness of “a strong feeling of identification with all [living] beings” and the realization that “every living being possesses a soul that may be capable of attaining omniscience” accompany practice as well. In turn, “this awareness of the basic worth of all beings, and of one’s kinship with them, generates a feeling of great compassion...for others.” Jains, then, begin with a desire to end their perpetual rebirth into suffering bodies, and arrive at a place of deep compassion for all living things through attitudinal changes that accompany the practice of ahimsa.

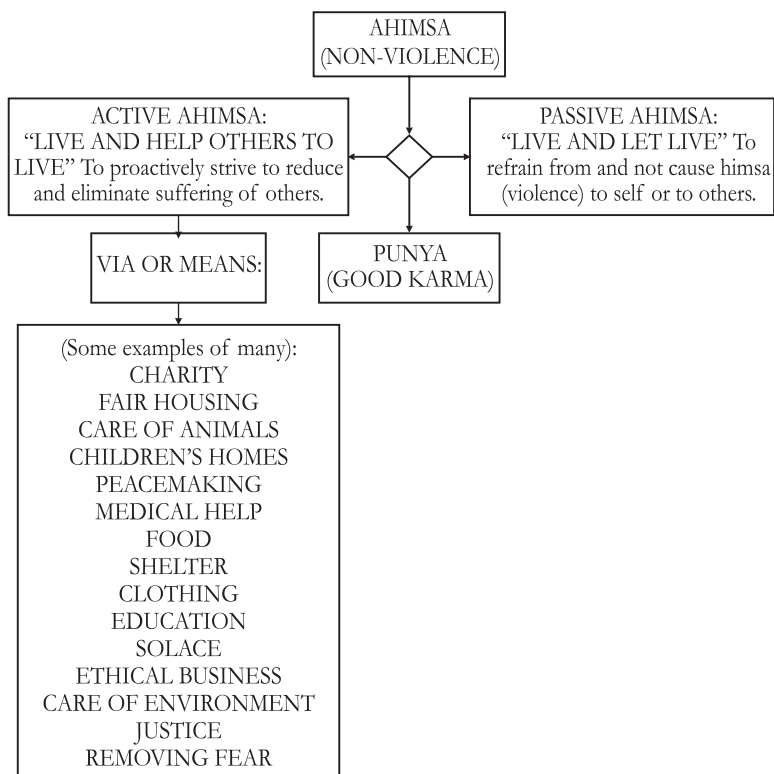
Professor Gary Francione says, “I consider the principle of ahimsa to be the principle of democracy of existence of all life forms. In my opinion, *anekantavada* —the Jain principle that no single point of view affords the complete truth —does not give us the freedom to choose a different interpretation of ahimsa. Ahimsa has only one meaning.”

According to Jainism, ahimsa is every person’s dharma (duty). It is to be practiced all the time with all the energies of the practitioner. It is not for sermons and preaching. It is for practice.

Having understood the basis and the definition of ahimsa, now we turn our attention to the types, classification, and intensity of himsa, and to how ahimsa is committed and practiced.

THE TWO TYPES OF AHIMSA

The practice of ahimsa can be either passive, which is manifested by not causing harm to others in any shape or form (also known as “live and let live”), or active, proactive or positive, which evidenced in the principle of helping to alleviate the suffering of others to the best of one’s ability (also known as “live and help others to live”). In this sense, ahimsa means that when an act of himsa is being committed, one cannot be a mere bystander or spectator.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACTIVE AND PASSIVE AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

THE THREE WAYS TO COMMIT HIMSA

The first way to commit himsa is with mental (bhava) himsa. This causes mental harm primarily to one’s self (svabhava himsa) and may be also mental harm to others (parabhava himsa). This violence in thought is always committed before action. Violence in thought, or psyche violence, (bhava himsa), is the true violence.

Mental violence to oneself can be done under when someone is in an agitated state of mind, or during circumstances that foster such states of mind. For instance, when a person is on the verge of committing suicide, he experiences extreme mental turmoil, which destroys his inner peace, contentment, joy, and purity of soul.

Mental violence to others happens when a person, through his attitudes or actions, evokes feelings of anger, fondness, or greed (just a few examples) in another person. In other words, he intentionally disturbs the mental peace (the bhava prana) of the other person.

When we intend to hurt or harm others, we give birth to kashayas (sins) such as anger, deception, pride, greed, love, and hate. Thus we always first commit violence to the self in the process.

This mental himsa is like starting a fire. It always sparks further himsa.

A second category of himsa is vaani or verbal himsa. Here, a little spark quickly becomes fire. What is in mind comes out in speech.

The third way to perform himsa is through physical (kaayaa) himsa. Here, the fire becomes an inferno, destroying everyone in its path. Here, too, the mental and verbal himsa unite with the physical to become partners.

A Jain scripture, the Dasavaikalika sutra states: “No sin accrues to one who walks, stands, sits, sleeps, eats, and speaks with vigilance.”

Since mental/bhaava himsa is the most dangerous, because it can lead so quickly to other forms of himsa, a good rule is to control it so that it doesn't spread to verbal and physical levels.

Here's an example of how the mere intention to harm (mental himsa) can be more dangerous and harmful than verbal and physical himsa:

In a town, one butcher makes his living by going into the forest, catching and killing birds, then selling their meat. One day, he takes his vast net into the forest, spreads it on the ground, sprinkles lot of bird feed on the net and hides quietly in the bushes and waits for the birds to come and eat the bird feed. Many hungry birds show up and start eating. At the same time, an ahimsak happens to walk by and sees the birds on the

net eating their food. He realizes what is going to happen to these birds. So he blows his whistle to save them; the birds are kept from being caught, and they all fly away.

Let us examine the bhaava, or mental intentions and actions of both the butcher and the ahimsak.

If we look at the butcher at the moment when the birds are hungry, he is doing nothing more than feeding them. He has not yet harmed them in any way. His physical action is that of compassion. However, his real intention is to catch and kill them. Here, his intention is bad but his action at that very moment is good.

Now, let us look at the ahimsak /compassionate person. By blowing his whistle, he deprived the hungry birds of their food. His physical action is of harm, or himsa, but his real intention is to save the lives of the birds.

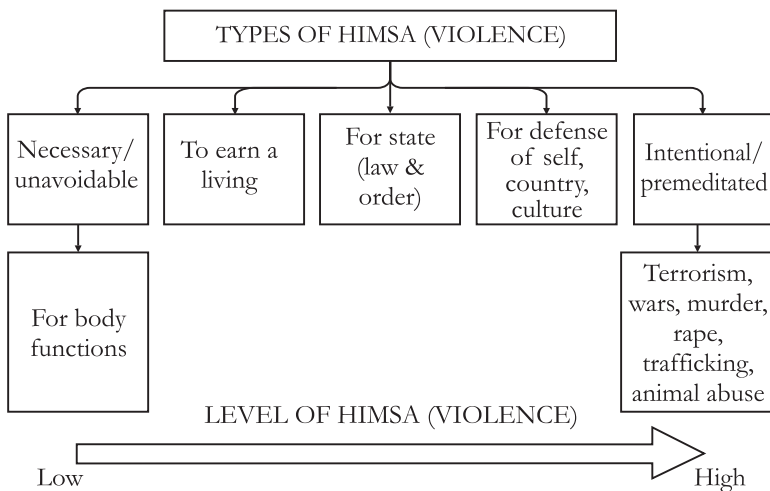
Here the butcher is guilty of serious himsa, both from the perspective of the law of karma and according to society's legal code, for his bad intention in planning the murder. On the other hand, the compassionate person has committed very little himsa, as his intentions are good.

Let us look at the same concept in another example from our daily life. A knife with sharp edges can be used to wound a person when it is in the hands of a robber or murderer. But the same knife can be used to save the life of a person when it is in the hands of a surgeon. The knife is the same but the users' intentions and their actions are polar opposites. In both cases, the actions involve cutting and making a person bleed, but the robber intends to kill, while the surgeon tries to save life.

In both examples, the intension is the most important factor and so the results - reward or punishment - are different. The same principle applies in real life when justice is dispensed by the courts of law. Many a time, one is declared guilty of the crime based on the intention of the doer rather than by the action itself.

THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF HIMSA

Himsa can be classified into several broad categories, in increasing order of severity and harm and also for binding of karmas and thus increasing the karmic load:



TYPES OF HIMSA (VIOLENCE) AND WHY IT IS COMMITTED

Anivaarya/swaroopi is unavoidable himsa. This refers to himsa that occurs when living beings are doing such basic things as breathing, speaking, eating, walking, and sleeping. Here, the person should observe all the care to avoid himsa and to reduce it as much as humanly or otherwise possible. This kind of himsa is the least severe in terms of inflow and binding of karmas. Generally, Jain monks adhere to the observance of this kind of ahimsa.

Aarambhi/uddyogi is himsa that is ethical for the purposes of earning a living. Every householder has to support life by earning a living and producing food, clothing and shelter. Here, one must look at all the alternatives and at doing the least possible himsa. One must question whether something is a want or a need. One must determine how to make a living with ethics, with morality, with the least harm to the environment and to the fellow beings (humans and non-humans). Also, one must limit and exercise control over

one's needs and wants with *aprigraha* (fewer attachments and accumulations). Obviously, the level of *himsa* committed here is more than that of unavoidable *himsa*.

Rajakeeya is *himsa* done in performing duties to and for the state or the country. This is *himsa* that is mandated by the society and the government to maintain law and order in the society. It includes the sentencing of convicted criminals by the courts and by police and other law-maintaining authorities. Here, the individual exercising *himsa* must take precaution to minimize its level. He should not do *himsa* to others with a motive of a personal vendetta, revenge, prejudice, hate, a show of power, greed, or for personal benefits and gains. The practitioner is obeying the just laws of the land. However, unjust laws should be resisted and opposed. One must make sure that innocents are not punished or inflicted with pain. The intensity of this *himsa* is greater than the previous two.

Virodhi *himsa* is *himsa* done in defense and protection. It could be in defense of the culture, community or country, or of innocent people. This kind of *himsa* generally refers to serving in the military. The practitioner should not hate the enemy or be motivated by self-interest, personal gain, or retribution. In other words, he commits *himsa* without any desire to harm the opponent. He should observe all precautions to minimize the level of *himsa* while still striving to achieve the goals. This *himsa* is acceptable but the level and intensity of *himsa* is much higher than in the types of *himsa* mentioned above.

Sankalpi himsa is pre-meditated *himsa*. This is an action planned and executed with full force of all the senses and the mind, speech, and body. *Sankalpi himsa* includes all deeds involving intentional, pre-meditated violence.

For example a murderer clearly sets out to end the life of his victim, hence he commits *sankalpi himsa*. Other examples would include incidents of terrorism such as the 9/11 attacks and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

This is the severest kind and highest level of himsa, since all the faculties of the practitioner (mental, verbal, and physical) are fully engaged.

The doer of this type of himsa binds to himself anootaan-bandhi karmas, which cannot easily be washed away or obliterated (a helpful metaphor is to imagine marking a line in stone or in steel). These kinds of karmas cannot be shed or destroyed by the doer without his suffering the results. Such himsa must not be condoned under any circumstances and must be avoided at all costs.

THE INTENSITY, DEGREES, AND LEVEL OF INFLOW OF KARMAS DUE TO HIMSA

Himsa, and hence inflow of karmas, depend upon:

- The levels with which the faculties of mind, speech and physical actions to commit himsa are engaged,
- Timing, intention, circumstances, and the
- Intensity and duration of engagement of the aforementioned three faculties in doing the action.

Based on the above, the results of action and binding (bandh) of karmas can be of following types:

- Like drawing a line in air. This “mark” lasts only a few milliseconds. Here the level of himsa is very low (mostly momentarily and held in one’s mind) and its effects can be much reduced or completely eliminated by contemplation, realizing the mistake and expressing repentance, and asking for forgiveness genuinely.
- Like drawing a line in water. Here the effect of himsa may last a little longer but its intensity, results, and the level of inflow of karmas can be reduced by realizing the mistake, taking responsibility, and doing some repentance and penance.
- Like drawing a line in sand. The effect of this himsa is much

longer lasting but its results can still be reduced by observing sincere penance and repentance.

- Like drawing a line in stone or steel. This is also called *anootaanbandhi* and is the severest type of *himsa*. This is a permanent line and cannot easily be eliminated. The doer must bear its fruits and suffer punishment.

The following metaphor illustrates the level or degree of *himsa* situations that we all come across in life. Imagine an apple tree and a hungry man. He has many choices, including:

- He can pick up only those apples that are already fallen on the ground. By doing so, he commits the least amount of *himsa*, if any.
- He can raise his hands, grab a branch of the apple tree, and pluck however many apples he needs to satiate his hunger. Here the degree or level of *himsa* is slightly greater.
- He might shake the whole apple tree. Many apples fall on the ground whereas he needs only a few for his needs. The level of *himsa* has increased significantly as he has expended energy against the tree beyond his needs.
- He cuts a branch of the tree, from whence he picks a few apples for his needs. Obviously this level of *himsa* is unnecessary.
- He cuts down the entire tree, so that no one can ever pluck apples from it again. This is a case of extreme *himsa*.

The image above, illustrating the metaphor, allows us to reflect upon whether the amount of *himsa* being done is necessary, moral, and unavoidable, or whether it can be reduced, minimized, or avoided entirely. In life, there are always such choices.

In the following paragraphs we describe the hierarchy of *himsa* and inflicted pain, as well as the actions and modes that cause *himsa*.



The level and intensity of suffering can best be described by asking the following question, “Is the level and intensity of suffering inflicted on a living being the same no matter how many senses that being possesses?”

The answer to this question is, simply, “no.” The level of pain and suffering experienced by a jiva is not the same for all jivas. It depends upon the number of *pranas* (life forces) in various life forms. Thus, there is a hierarchy of various life forms.

In a paper titled “Comprehensive Concept of Ahimsa; Its Application in Real Life,”⁸ D.R. Mehta writes that:

...the principle of equality of souls is...at times applied or understood wrongly. In Jain canons the synonym of Himsa or violence is the expression ‘*pranatipata*,’ which means that the sin of killing is in proportion to the *pranas* (life forces) taken. It is a subtle aspect, which needs to be explained. Soul is indestructible and what can be killed is only the body. For

8. D.R. Mehta, “Comprehensive Concept of Ahimsa; Its Application in Real Life,” Jain Study Notes Volume 4.0 (2011): 438-450.

bodies, Lord Mahavira gives a fivefold classification. According to him, bodies are one-sensed, two-sensed, three-sensed, four-sensed and five-sensed. The micro level creatures in air, water, earth, etc. are one-sensed. On the other hand, human beings or other large creatures have five senses. The level of prana in these categories of life forms increases with the number of senses. For example human beings have ten pranas. According to Lord Mahavira, the killing of a human being is far more sinful than the killing of lower forms of lives possessing lesser number of pranas by being a vegetarian rather than a meat eater.

An ahimsak respects the hierarchy of one-sensed through five-sensed life forms. He knows that all life forms are not equal in terms of the degree of himsa (pain and suffering) felt. Thus he bases his daily actions and living on this hierarchy. An ahimsak seeks to exclude, as far as possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, all living beings for food, clothing, or for any other purpose.

Shown below is a summary of the number of pranas, and the pain and suffering experienced by a jiva:

- One-sensed beings have four pranas; these include: life span, physical power, respiration, and sense of touch.
- Two-sensed beings have six pranas, including: life span, physical power, respiration, sense of touch and taste, and vocal power.
- Three-sensed beings have seven pranas, including: life span, physical power, respiration, sense of touch, taste and smell, and vocal power.
- Four-sensed beings have eight pranas, including: life span, physical power, respiration, sense of touch, taste and smell, seeing, and vocal power.
- Five-sensed (non-sentient jiva) beings have nine pranas; these include: life span, physical power, respiration, sense of touch, taste, and smell, seeing and hearing, and vocal power.

- Five-sensed (sentient jiva) beings have ten pranas, including: life span, physical power, respiration, sense of touch, taste, and smell, and seeing, hearing, vocal power, and mental power.

The above hierarchy of existence and the levels of suffering tell us that the level of pain inflicted in a plant-based diet is much less than in an animal-based diet.

THE BROAD LANDSCAPE OF HIMSA

Himsa caused by humans creates a large and vast landscape and is done in many shapes and forms, with or without motives. It encompasses himsa committed for basic bodily needs for food, clothing, shelter, and medicine, secondary needs and desires for physical beauty, for sports and entertainment, for furnishings, for transportation, for societal and religious customs, and stemming from ego, anger, hatred, greed, control, power, and dominance over others.

Likewise, the practice of ahimsa applies to practices regarding our food, clothing, furnishings, medicines, sports, entertainments, decisions made regarding gender, race, and species relations, interpersonal relations, and practices around business, investments, professions, faith traditions, viewpoints on the world, and regarding the environment.

If one is striving to be an ahimsak, he needs to be aware of whether, in satisfying his personal needs, he is involved in actions that lead to the suffering of any humans, animals, birds, fish, or insects. Specifically, when he eats and drinks, he needs to know if the items he consumes contain or are derived from animals, insects, meat, fish, milk, or eggs. He also needs to ascertain whether his clothing or footwear is made of silk, wool, leather, or fur, and whether his cosmetic and personal hygiene products involved animal experimentation or contain animal products. He must find out whether his home furnishings and flooring materials were made using child labor, sweatshops, or animal products (skins, fur, tusks, horns, antlers or bones from animals, or feathers from birds).

Additionally, he needs to know whether the medicine he takes and the delivery system and personnel who provide the medicine were involved in the use of animals and plants. Does he have firearms in his home? Is his car or boat furnished with leather, silk, or fur? What about his wallet or handbag? Does he hunt, shoot, or fish? Does he attend cockfights or bullfights, dog racing or horse racing events? Does he go to the circus or the zoo?

Similarly, an ahimsak must ask: How many miles per gallon does his car get? How much pollution does his company discharge into the air, land, and water? Does he use chemicals on his lawn? Does he buy organic produce? How much paper does he use? How often does he use trains, airplanes, and other fuel-guzzling forms of transport?

Does he participate in animal sacrifice, in the stoning of humans or animals? Does he smoke cigarettes or cigars?

The ahimsak must examine all his relationships, direct and indirect. He asks whether he is involved in any form of discrimination, racial profiling, unjust and discriminatory laws and regulations, in apartheid or slavery or untouchability, in crimes, terrorism, riots, unjust wars or any other conflicts.

He looks at his investments, to see if he is profiting from the exploitation of humans or animals, in the destruction of the environment, or in activities that endanger human health and safety.

He considers all aspects of his personal life and family life, his religious life, his business and social life. He asks whether he is involved in any religious intolerance, whether he possesses anything that by law belongs to another, whether his workplace supports discrimination based on sex, gender, skin color, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, age, size, or disability. He evaluates his company's hiring and firing policies, its promotions and demotions, and compensation and rewards policies.

In short, one who follows ahimsa leaves no stone unturned in the pursuit of love, respect and compassion for all, in

TOOLS OF AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

NON-VIOLENCE
BY MEANS OF:

(Some examples, of many):

- Language/speech
- Writings
- TV, Facebook, You Tube, online
- Education
- Charity
- Meditation/Equanimity
- Eating vegetarian or vegan
- Conserving resources
- Celibacy
- Protecting animals
- Providing care
- Helping others
- Removing fear
- Providing food, shelter, clothing and medical care

SOME EXAMPLES OF TOOLS OF AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

thought, speech, and actions. Ahimsa eliminates all forms of hatred, malice, and jealousy. It welcomes all with equality and equanimity. It is free of ego, anger, greed, deceit, and hypocrisy. It results in relaxation, joy, tranquility, and inner peace.

To aid in this multi-faced and close examination of the possibilities for himsa in their daily lives, many Jains observe the ritual known as Pratikraman. Some Jains practice this daily and some only a few times a year. During Paryushana and Das Laxan (during holy days, Jains observe over a period of eighteen day between August and September time), Pratikraman is a must for both Svetambaras and Digambaras.

Pratikraman is a systematic and thoughtful process designed to focus on one's life (over the past twenty-four hours, six months, a year, or whatever period of time is the subject of

reflection) and to engage in an honest self-assessment of what, where, and when acts of himsa have been committed. In this process, the aspirant recounts, reflects and repents of his actions of himsa and asks for forgiveness from those who have been harmed. He also takes a vow to not repeat the himsa or engage in further himsa. The Pratikraman Sutras include the following eighteen ways himsa can be committed. By reflecting on these eighteen papas (acts of himsa), one is then on a path to minimize himsa in one's life.

The eighteen papas (acts of himsa) include: violence, lying, stealing, sensuous indulgence, accumulation, anger, ego, deceit, greed, attachment, resentment, disputation, making false allegations, talking behind the backs of others, affection and disaffection, gossiping, lying, and wrongful perception.

Please note that:

- All eighteen papas reflect various kinds of himsa,
- Nearly all of the twelve varatas (vows) of shravaks (lay followers) deal with avoiding or not doing himsa, and are also about practices that promote nirjara (shedding) of already accumulated karmas
- The seventh Agama of Jains (a holy scripture), which describes the life histories of ten prominent sharavaks of Mahavir Bhagwan, is mostly concerned with himsa and ahimsa,
- Vigai, as a varat, forbids all dairy products, and
- All ten laxan (virtues) dharma of Digambra Jains are based on ahimsa.

Finally, the Acaranga Sutra, which forms the basis of law and conduct for all Jains, “condemns himsa by saying that its operation is without any stop, cessation and discontinuance and it goes on increasing to the extent possible with the political consequence that the race of armaments becomes impossible to arrest and continues to grow without any check.”

THE MINIMUM JAIN CODE OF CONDUCT

The Jain code of conduct lays down certain parameters for an ahimsak; the code states:

1. I will not kill any innocent creature intentionally nor will I commit suicide.
2. I will not subject any employee or worker to overwork nor will I overload animals and beasts.
3. I will not propagate misleading ideas or falsely implicate anyone.
4. I will not enroll as a member of an organization or a party that believes in violence and vandalism nor will I indulge in these activities.
5. I will not use products that are made from or tested on animals.
6. I will treat everyone as equals and practice tolerance towards all faiths.
7. I will practice physical, mental and intellectual nonviolence.
8. I will earn my living by honest and ethical means without deceiving and taking advantage of others.

By following this code, one attains self-control, friendliness, and compassion as well as freedom from greed. This is imperative for the salvation of every individual.

TRAITS OF AN AHIMSAK

An ahimsak will be marked by the following traits:

1. Love
2. Honesty
3. Humbleness
4. Joy
5. Peace
6. Patience

7. Kindness
8. Goodness
9. Faithfulness
10. Gentleness
11. Self-control

THE NET BENEFITS OF OBSERVING AHIMSA

- Practicing ahimsa leads to:
- Respect for all life forms (democracy of existence),
- Respect for others' views (democracy of views and beliefs),
- Non-attachment (absence of hatred and attached love),
- Limits on possessions (democracy of possessions),
- Inter-dependence on and hence respect for all (bound together as we are, no one survives independently), and
- Reduction in inflow of karma or deeds.

WHO AM I?

Mahapragya, a Jain Acharya, describes the answer to the existential question, "Who am I?" with the following:

"Soul is my God.

Renunciation is my prayer.

Amity is my devotion.

Self-restraint is my strength.

Nonviolence is my religion."

JAIN SCRIPTURES ON AHIMSA

The Jain scriptures go further, reminding us that:

Some kill living beings for sacrificial purposes,

Some kill for their skins,

Some kill for their flesh,

Some for the blood, heart, liver, fat, feathers or teeth....

Some out of fear.

*He who is disinclined to kill the smallest living thing,
knows what suffering is, because he who sees and understands
the real cause of his own happiness and pains, knows others' too.*

*And he who sees and understands
others' feelings also knows his own feelings.*

This is the way one must compare oneself with others.

*Knowing what is bad, he who knows it with regard to himself
knows it with regard to the world;*

*And he who knows it with regard to the world outside,
knows it with regard to himself.*

*This reciprocity between oneself and others
(one should mind).*

Thus we enjoin on you, thus do we say,

Thus we believe, thus we proclaim to all:

No living things should be slain anywhere,

Nor ordered forcibly this way or that.

Nor put in bonds, nor tortured any way

Or treated violently otherwise:

Because you are the same which ye would slay

Or order here or there against his will.

Or put in prison, or subject to pain,

Or treat with violence: ye are the same;

The Self-same Life doth circulate in all.

-Lord Mahavir – Acharanga Sutra

Similarly, the Uttradhayan sutra shares the following:

“Seeing the self in every one and everywhere, knowing that all beings love their life, we, having made ourselves free from fear and enmity, should not kill other beings,”

and the Acharanga sutra reminds us: “All living beings love their life. For them happiness is desirable; unhappiness is not desirable. Nobody likes to be killed. Everybody is desirous of life. Everyone loves his own life.”

Finally, Lord Mahavira preached, “Nonviolence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself. For thereby one’s own self is saved from various kinds of sins and resultant sufferings and is able to secure one’s own freedom.”

“Our cup of compassion must become our perpetual mindset. The mindset of compassion makes us sensitive and motivates us not to accept pain, poverty and injustice to others. He who is disinclined to kill the smallest living thing, knows what suffering is, because he who sees and understands the real cause of his own happiness and pain, knows others too.”

“There is nothing so small and subtle as the atom or any element as vast as space. Similarly, there is no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life.”

JAIN PRAYERS and THOUGHTS

I will end this chapter with some Jain prayers and thoughts for contemplation.

Khame mee sarve jeeva, sarve jeeva khaman tume, mittee me sarve bhooye soo, veram majjham na kenayee.

Translation: I ask for forgiveness, for any harm I have done, from all living creatures, and I treat them all equally. I have friendship toward all and hatred towards none. I wish no one any harm.

Jam jam manen vaddham,’ jam jam vaayen bhaasiyam paavam, jam jam kaayen kadam, Tas micchhami dukkadam.

Translation: Whenever I have thought ill of others, whenever I have uttered bad and violent words, whenever I have physically caused harm, pain and suffering to others, I sincerely repent and ask for their forgiveness.

Shivamastu Sarvajagtab, Parabitānirata bhavantu bbutaganah Dosah prayantu nasham, sarvatra sukhibhavatu lokkah.

Translation: May the entire universe be blessed; may all beings engage in each other's well-being; may all weakness, sickness and faults vanish, may every one and everywhere be healthy, peaceful and blissful.

Sarve bhavantu sukhina, sarve santu niramaya. Sarve bhadrani pashiyantu, ma kashchit dukha bhag bhavet.

Translation: May there be always happiness. May all see and feel good thoughts. May no one suffer pain and misery.

"There are many causes I am willing to die for but no cause I am willing to kill for." Mahatma Gandhi

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." Mahatma Gandhi

"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being. We should be able to refuse to live if the price of living is to be the torture of sentient beings." Mahatma Gandhi

"Let us pray that our food should not be colored with animal blood and human suffering." Gurudev Chitrabhanuji; a Jain monk.

A POEM & OTHER THOUGHTS ON AHIMSA

A poem on ahimsa by Arjunan Subramaniam:

*Light the flames of compassion,
In the altar of your hearts.
Unless hatred is answered with love,
Until forgiveness arises in the hearts,
The chain that binds you to life after life,
Will not be cut.*

And finally, "Thoughts on the Practice of Ahimsa by a Schoolteacher After the Newtown, CT, School Shooting," by

Jessica Rubin, Teacher at Rocky Point High School, Middle Island, NY (originally shared as a blog post on December 17, 2012.)

“Tomorrow is my first day teaching after the tragedy in Connecticut, and tonight I cannot sleep. I am obsessively thinking about how to talk to my students— five full classes of sensitive, vibrant, unpredictable teenagers— about violence and tragedy, about life and death and love and humanity.

The easiest thing to do would be to move forward with the lessons I have planned about the books we are reading, books whose themes are relevant and important in moments like this. It is easier to talk about tragedy through the abstractions of fantasy and character. But, I know I must face the difficult reality of our world at this exact moment in time, even though it terrifies me.

I will tell my students I love them, and that the brave actions of the teachers who were killed protecting their classes did not surprise me.

As teenagers, they need more than love and reassurance, more than someone to promise that the dark is nothing to be afraid of. They are sophisticated thinkers, many of whom are on the precipice of great understanding and deep connections with themselves and the universe. I want to empower them to be forces of peace in a turbulent and violent society. I want hope to permanently illuminate their worlds, even now.

This summer, I studied nonviolence with a group of American teachers in India. Nonviolent philosophy has permeated my thinking since then, and I have become painfully aware of the levels of violence that exist in my everyday life.

It is unnerving and uncomfortable to admit how much violence exists around us, and the quantity of violent acts that each of us is complicit in by participating as spectators or non-objectors. By purchasing music that glorifies a violent lifestyle, clicking ‘like’ on a hateful Facebook post, or choosing to ignore hurtful

words in the hallway, otherwise ‘nonviolent’ people accept and excuse violence in their environment. Ahimsa, the Sanskrit term for the traditional philosophy of nonviolence, requires abstaining from harmful actions, harmful speech, and harmful thoughts. It also requires practitioners to avoid celebrating the harmful acts of others, and to avoid being harmful to oneself and one’s surroundings.

We see a massacre of innocent children and know that it is violent, but we must learn to recognize the smallest acts of violence in our society before we can begin to rehabilitate our thoughts, speech, and actions toward a more peaceful existence.

It starts in calling things by their proper names, by using clear language instead of euphemisms. Violence of any kind causes suffering, and suffering will only lead to more violence. Hateful speech is violence. Bullying is violence. Laughing at the misfortune of others, even when they can’t hear you, is violence. Wishing for the suffering of others, even those who have done terrible things, is violence. If we want to have any hope of living peacefully, we must confront the volume of violence in our everyday lives and stop participating as perpetrators, observers, and consumers.

As human beings living in a violent culture, our violent reactions often feel justified. It takes bravery and self-awareness to acknowledge fear and anger and then react without hatred. The deeply rooted violence of culture cannot be stopped by more hatred, and reactive solutions will only delay the next tragedy. Yes, laws may change, and many laws probably should. But, the entrenched violence of a culture cannot be stopped by changes in legislation or harsher, more violent punishments for criminals. We cannot depend on politicians or celebrities to make our world what we want it to be; each one of us must take positive action to do that every day.

In order to turn the tide of violence in our country, we must commit to start with ourselves, our own thoughts, words,

behaviors, and reactions, and we must hold ourselves honestly accountable. In order to stop the violence in the world around us, we must confront the violence we are a part of. And when we make mistakes, we must forgive ourselves as readily and truly as we will forgive others, and move on, and do better.

Although we may feel inundated by the helplessness that tragedy creates, each of us has tremendous power already within us. Lao Tzu said, 'He who controls himself controls the world.' Each moment we are alive is a chance to make the world more peaceful, and make ourselves more free."

Beautiful lines on Ahimsa from the Mahabharata

अहिंसा परमोधर्मस्तथाहिंसा परो दमः
अहिंसा परमं दानमहिंसा परमं तपः॥
अहिंसा परमो यज्ञस्तथाहिंसा परमं बलम्
अहिंसा परमं मित्रमहिंसा परमं सुखम्
अहिंसा परमं सत्यमहिंसा परमं श्रुतम्॥

ahiṃsā paramo dharmastathāhiṃsā paro damaḥ
ahiṃsā paramaṃ dānamahiṃsā paramaṃ tapaḥ
ahiṃsā paramo yajñastathāhiṃsā paraṃ balam
ahiṃsā paramaṃ mitramahiṃsā paramaṃ sukham
ahiṃsā paramaṃ satyamahiṃsā paramaṃ śrutam

Nonviolence is the supreme religion
Nonviolence is the supreme self-restraint
Nonviolence is the supreme donation
Nonviolence is the supreme penance
Nonviolence is the supreme worship
Nonviolence is the supreme strength
Nonviolence is the supreme friend
Nonviolence is the supreme bliss
Nonviolence is the supreme truth
Nonviolence is the supreme teaching

As shown earlier, humans are the most violent creatures/ animals.

Finally, we conclude this chapter with a classic text that reminds us the profound importance of ahimsa.

REFERENCES

In this chapter, the author has used some information from the following references:

- D. R. Mehta, “Comprehensive Concept of Ahimsa; Its Application in Real Life,” (see International School for Jain Studies lecture notes, pp 438-450).
- Shugan Chand Jain, unpublished paper, “Ahiṃsā / Non-violence; its dimensions and practices.”
- Dr. L.M.Singhvi from his several writings.

ON ITEMS WE PUT IN OUR MOUTHS

MOVING FROM VEGETARIAN TO PURE VEGETARIAN (AHIMSAK) LIFE STYLE

In this chapter we will discuss issues of food, drink, and medicine and how consumption of all these affect the practice of ahimsa. Here the following lifestyles come into play:

Non-vegetarian: The practitioners of this lifestyle freely eat, consume, and use (as food, drink, clothing, cosmetics, and home furnishings) animal based products.

Vegetarian: There is no one definition or description for being vegetarian. It varies by culture or environment; one common attribute is that a vegetarian does not eat “meat.” What is considered meat may vary. As a result, “vegetarian” has many broad definitions and understandings in different parts of the world.

In general, a vegetarian is one who does not eat animal products (such as meat, fish, chicken, and eggs) but may or may not use animal products for clothing, furnishings, and beauty. Many vegetarians use dairy products (they are called lacto-vegetarians). Most of the Jains fall into this category.

With this general definition in mind, there are still several exceptions to this category who still call themselves vegetarians. Some who consider themselves vegetarians do eat eggs or fish. Some may eat eggs, fish, and chicken—but not beef—and still call themselves vegetarian.

There are also some who call themselves vegetarians and shun animal products in their food most of the time, but on occasions may consume meat. I call them “part time” or “convenience based” vegetarians.

To understand the dimensions and complexity of something that seems simple, just look at an airline menu; one will find a large number of food varieties under the category of “vegetarian meals.” Some contain eggs, fish, or even chicken but still are labeled vegetarian.

Vegan: Veganism is clearly not a religion or cult. There is no church, temple, or mosque of vegans. Veganism is a philosophy and way of living (much closer or akin to Jainism) which excludes all forms of exploitation and cruelty to animals for the benefit of humans, other animals, and the environment. In lifestyle terms, it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.

Vegans are those who have chosen to open their minds and hearts to the suffering of animals. They have opened their eyes to the fact that most meat, dairy, and eggs come from factory farms where animals are crammed into spaces so tight they can’t turn around, lie day and night in their own feces, have never seen sunlight, have their beaks, horns, and genitals cut off (without anesthetic) and are horribly abused by farm workers.

Please note that all animals, whether raised in the nastiest of factory farms or raised as grass-fed and free-range, are sent to the same slaughterhouses. They meet the same ghastly end.

So when a vegan tells a meat-eater, dairy product consumer about these issues, he or she is not “preaching, trying to

convert,” or any such thing. Since animals can’t speak a language humans can understand (though I think the screams and terrified moans that fill slaughterhouses should be pretty much universal) it’s up to you to tell their stories and inform people of their sufferings. All animals deserve to be free from unnecessary pain, fear, and suffering at the hands of humans.

Ahimsak: This lifestyle refers to one who is a vegan and also avoids eating even root vegetables that grow underground such as potatoes, onions, and carrots. Some Jains will avoid root vegetables because of a concern about not harming nigods (microorganisms). This practice is closest to the pure, Jain ahimsak way of life.

In these three categories, we see the possible categories from vegetarian, to vegan, to pure ahimsak.

Most Jains are vegetarians and observe a strict Jain diet. Some Jains, as noted, will avoid root vegetables. Additionally, they will not eat after sunset to avoid harm to very small organisms.

However, most Jains are neither vegan nor pure ahimsak because they consume dairy products including milk, ghee, yoghurt, cheese, ice cream, sweets (made from milk) and other dairy products. In today’s environment, consumption of these creates footprints of himsa to mobile, multi-sensed (five sensed) beings.

In today’s most common way of life for Jains, there is quite a concern for micro (sooksham) himsa but little deliberation or discussion about macro (sthool) himsa.

Unfortunately, many Jains reject veganism as a recent, Western fad that has nothing to do with Jain Dharma or with Indian culture generally. This is a misunderstanding. The Hindi word for vegetarian is shaakaa-haari (the one who lives on a plant-based diet only and does not consume any product other than those coming from plants).

Thus, veganism is neither new, nor a fad. It is an ancient concept. In fact, the very word “veganism” is derived from “veg-etari-

anism.” I consider veganism to be pure vegetarianism (with the exception of root vegetables—vegans would consume these while a Jain ahimsak would not).

Veganism supports the notion that we cannot and should not justify killing or imposing suffering on any mobile, multi-sensed being. In my view, veganism or pure ahimsak-ism is not only consistent with the practice of Jain Dharma - it is required by it.

KISSA THALI KAA

(A TALE OF THE FOOD PLATE), OR WHAT WE PUT IN OUR MOUTHS

Essentially, everything boils down to thali (food plate), or to the food that we need to nourish our bodies and to keep and remain healthy. In the following sections of this chapter, we will discuss the practice of ahimsa, or lack of ahimsa, in items that we put in our mouths such as food, drink, mouth fresheners, and medicines. Since most the Jains are supposed to be vegetarians, in this chapter we will not discuss vegetarian vs. non-vegetarian food.

HIMSA IN WHAT WE EAT

There is a saying that goes “Jaisa khano anna vaisa bane mana,” or, “our thoughts are directly related to food we take.”

With this in mind, the one line basis for food selection should be “Why kill for food if we can do without killing?” Here, the two broad classifications of immobile and mobile beings come in handy. The underlying non-violent principle is to completely avoid killing mobile, living beings (from two-sensed to five-sensed) and minimize the killing and harming of one-sensed living beings, i.e. air, water, earth, plant and fire bodied living beings. The former cultivates in us a feeling of compassion towards living beings while the latter is essential to maintain healthy ecosystems.

A global conference on warming in Copenhagen established and resolved that a significant proportion of greenhouse gases can be eliminated if we all become vegetarians for one day a week. Besides this, if we realize the cruelty inflicted on animals in raising beef stock and milk animals, the creation of dairy products and the practice of mechanized butchering will repel even the staunchest eaters of meat from consuming animal based products (Shugan Chand Jain, unpublished paper, “Ahiṁsā / Non-violence; its dimensions and practices.”).

IS AHIMSA LIMITED TO THE THALI IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY?

Yes, it appears to be so. For many Jains, ahimsa practice in their daily lives is generally limited to food issues. To review, most Jains are vegetarians and do not eat meat, poultry, fish, or eggs but do consume dairy products. Although they eat one-sensed organisms—plants—many avoid all or some types of root vegetables (vegetables that grow under the ground such as potatoes, carrots, and onions) because it is thought that consuming these vegetables involve more and additional himsa.

This additional himsa comes from two sources. First, when we pull a root vegetable out of the earth, we often kill the entire plant rather than just taking a fruit or some other part of the plant that leaves the overall plant structure unharmed. Second, some Jains believe that certain root vegetables, such as onion and garlic, as well as foods like figs and honey, contain many other microscopic living organisms called nigods (the minutest form of life). Some Jains will not eat certain green vegetables on certain days of a month or during Jain holy days such as Paryushan and Das Laxan, which is a practice emphasized in many of the pravachans and preaching by Jain monks and nuns. Some ascetics ask their followers not to eat certain types of pickles as well.

In India, in major restaurants, hotels and on airlines, Jain food is well recognized and generally available. In many Jain

homes, people will have a cotton cloth filter on the mouth of the water tap to avoid any insects being harmed or digested. In weddings, parties, and celebrations and in Jain temples and places of worship, Jain food (vegetarian without root vegetables) will be served. In many ways, Jains have developed minute details of practice in their diet and culinary habits with these rules and restrictions.

It has been estimated that every vegan saves roughly two hundred animals a year, not to mention the reversal of water waste and topsoil erosion. Carbon emissions from factory farms and slaughterhouses are now the single largest contributor to so-called greenhouse gasses, which are linked to global warming. Taking into account the subtle shift in public awareness towards veganism over the last two decades, clearly a change is already taking place. All that is left to consider is whether humanity can wean itself off of meat and dairy before the earth reaches a calamitous tipping point.

“ALL VEGANS ARE NOT JAINS BUT ALL JAINS SHOULD BE VEGAN”

Dilip Shah, Past President JAINA

SHOULD JAINS USE DAIRY PRODUCTS?

A NUNENDING DEBATE

PAST CULTURAL PRACTICES & TRADITIONS ABOUT THE USE OF DAIRY PRODUCTS

For millennia, the use of milk and dairy products has been a part of Indian (and so, also of Jain) culture and diet. Milk and dairy products including milk, yoghurt, raita, paneer, ghee, butter, and hundreds of milk based sweets, are not only consumed directly as food but are also used in many Ayurvedic medicine systems as well as in Jain temples (for pooja, abhishek, prakshals, dipak, and arti). It has also found its use in terminologies such as Jain fund raising rituals called “ghee boli” in temples.

Milk and dairy products are used by Jain shravaks and shravikas as well as by sadhus and sadhvis. There is no taboo and as a result there has been very little debate about the origin and use of dairy in homes and in rituals.

For millennia, the cow was an economic engine (mostly in agriculturally based societies), was revered, was cared for humanely, and all its products (milk, cow dung, urine, leather and its male/oxen children) were used extensively in and by the Indian society.

Production of milk and other cow by products were mostly humane. Cows were raised in homes, cared for till their full lives and were treated very humanely.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The current situation is very different.

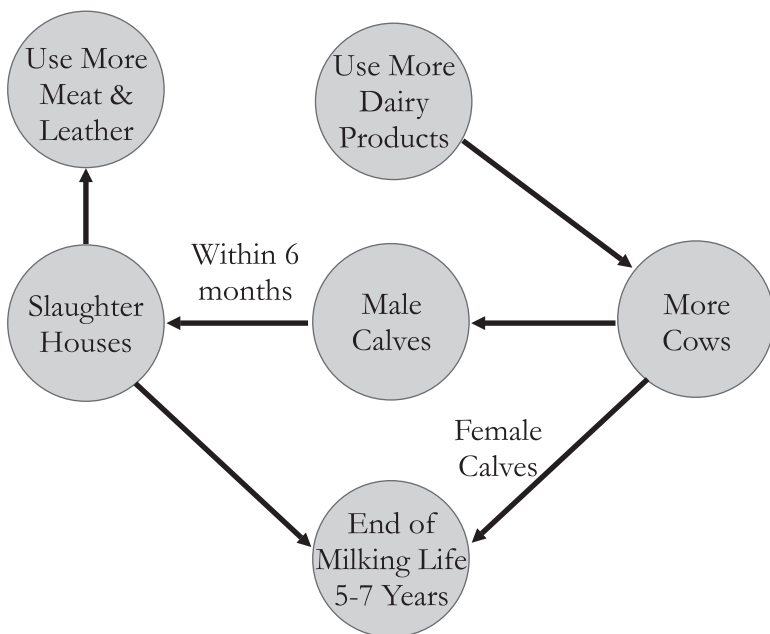
The use of milk and dairy products in India, and globally, has increased manifold over the last five to six decades. There are hundreds of sweets, paneer bhaji and other paneer items, pizza, and more and bigger abhisheks and artis in temples everywhere.

The production of milk is a huge industry; industry includes large cooperatives, with thousands of cows, and government and private milk corporations. Only a very small percentage of milk is now produced by cows kept in users' homes and treated and raised humanely.

From birth, the life journey of a cow is full of human-caused suffering, torture, and pain.

Please note that the average life span of a normal cow (not in factory farms) is 20-25 years. Factory farms cut it down to 5-7 years as after this life span they are sent to slaughterhouse.

First, a female cow is kept constantly pregnant (by artificial insemination), gives birth six to eight times, her milk is sucked by machines (a constant and tortuous process), and as soon as the milking life is over (which lasts no more than five to seven years), the cow is then straightaway sold to slaughterhouses to be killed for meat and its other byproducts. This actually happens in India, too, every second. One only has to go to the dairy farms to see the torture with one's own eyes. Many a time, seeing is believing. In fact, there is more torture to cows and to their offspring in India than in the US. This is a reality. Slaughterhouse wastes (very low quality meats) are mixed in cow feed and are then given to the cows to improve milk yields, thus making the cows non-vegetarians. This might



Vicious life cycle of a Cow and her Children

come as a surprise to Jains who have always believed cows to be vegetarian animal. This was once the case, but not anymore. During its milking life, cows are fed and injected with many medicines and hormones, thus practically making milk poisonous for human consumption.

And so we see: milk production and consumption has a very strong himsa footprint to five-sensed animals. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

COWS' MILK SOLD IN THE USA IS NOT VEGETARIAN.

By Tejas Shah, Toronto (Canada): "In the USA (also in Canada) most milk sold in stores is fortified with Vitamin D3. Upon further research I found that Vitamin D3 is derived from animal sources, thus making it non-vegetarian. I am surprised to learn this through my own research rather. I understand there is debate on whether cows' milk (not fortified with D3)

should be consumed by Jains. But since D3 is found in most milk in the USA, there is another more basic argument to be made on the grounds that D3 is non-vegetarian.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF VITAMIN D IN MILK?

Milk from all lactating animals, including humans, contains Vitamin D3 that has been produced photo-chemically from 7-dehydrocholesterol present in the skin. In cow's milk it has been determined that the concentration of Vitamin D3 in milk provided by the cow is roughly 35-70 International Units per quart as determined via biological assay and approximately 50-80 International Units as determined by modern chemical mass spectrometric procedures. However these are rather low levels of Vitamin D3 from the perspective of providing the 200-400 IU per day as recommended by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine. Accordingly, as discussed above, the business practice of supplementing cows' milk with chemically synthesized Vitamin D3 was initiated.

At the present time almost all milk sold commercially in the United States has 400 IU of chemically synthesized Vitamin D3 added per quart. Any vendor of milk for human consumption containing added Vitamin D3 is required by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to include a notice on the milk carton label. Usually this label states '400 IU of added Vitamin D3.' However it is not required by law to indicate either the manufacturer of the added Vitamin D3 or the sources of the cholesterol and 7-dehydrocholesterol used for its production. It is a fact that most milk sold in the US will contain Vitamin D3 with two origins:

- a) That Vitamin D3 made by the cow using sunlight to irradiate 7-dehydrocholesterol present in her skin.
- b) That Vitamin D3 made by a chemical process and then added to the cow milk as a nutritional supplement.

It is simply not possible to distinguish the origins of the two Vitamin D3 preparations by any biological or chemical

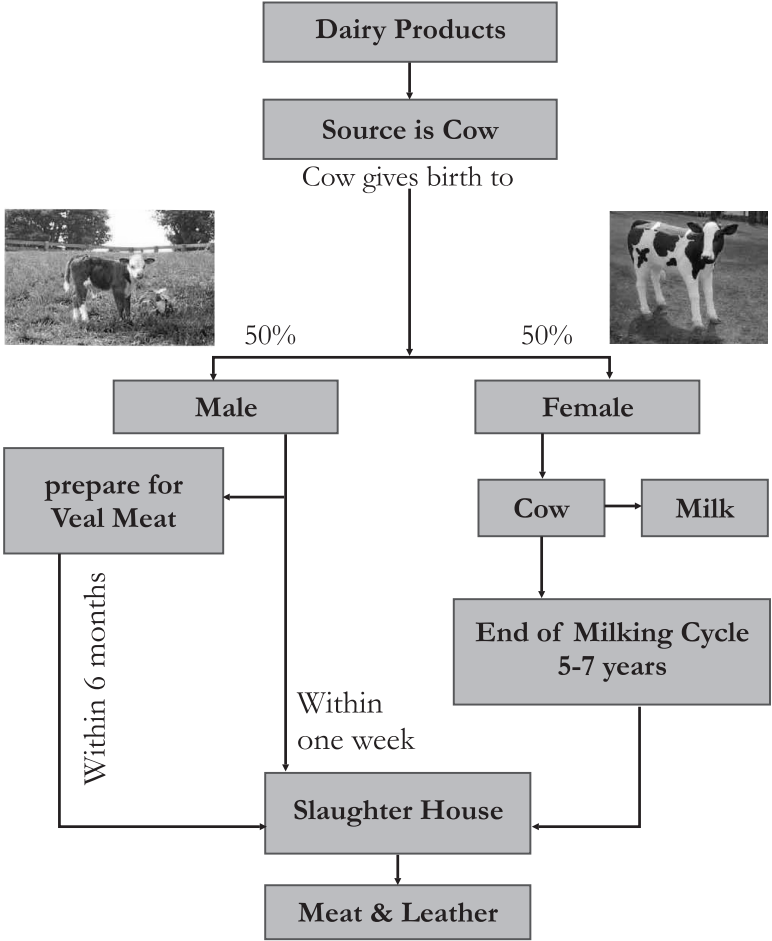
procedure, because they are the same molecular structure. Further, there is no legal requirement for the manufacturer of the Vitamin D3 formulated for human food supplementation to specify the animal sources of the precursor molecules that were employed in the synthesis of the D vitamin. If a 'food product' is construed to include a chemically pure substance that is the same in all animal species, then those individuals with strict religious reasons for avoiding food products from a particular species have, in the instance of milk and Vitamin D3, a dilemma."

For Source and more information see: <http://vitamind.ucr.edu/milk.html>

THE FATE OF COW'S CHILDREN: CRY OF THE CALF - ARE WE LISTENING?



Now please read this. This should be an eye opener. By the rule of nature, cows give birth to male and female babies in a near fifty-fifty proportion. In present days, due to electricity, tractors, the mechanization of agriculture and transportation of goods, 90% of these cows' male offspring (calves) have no more humane societal and economic use and hence are only an economic burden. As a result, just after birth, male calves are sold to slaughterhouses for tender meat such as veal; thus, the life of a calf can be counted in hours, days, or weeks only.



Fate of Cow's Children

In India, USA and all over the world, since the use of milk and dairy products has increased at least tenfold and keeps on increasing every day, so has the number of cows and the male calves bred for this use. As we consume more dairy products, we need more cows and consequently we are breeding more male calves with their only journey in life directly to slaughterhouses. The male calf has only one fate, to be slaughtered shortly after birth to become an item on a non-vegetarian's food plate. Thus the cycle continues. The cry of the calf is real. Are we willing to listen and pay attention to it?

If I were a calf, I will speak to the Jains, saying, "My Jain friends, you the keeper of ahimsa, why do you drink my mother's milk? Do you know how much my mother suffers because you want her milk? You snatch away 70-80% of my mother's milk—which was meant for me. Not only that, my mother goes to the slaughterhouse to be killed when she stops producing anymore milk, but I don't even get a chance to live. As soon as I am born, right away, or within a few weeks, I am taken to the slaughterhouse, get killed, and become flesh-food on someone's plate. How long should my mother and I suffer because you want her milk? Oh, Jains, if all of you would stop using dairy products in any shape or form, you would be saving so many of us calves from that slaughter and my mother from lifelong cruelty."

If one looks at the total himsa involved in the production of milk, it is safe to say that milk is a himsak product. Some may even argue that in meat production, the animal goes through less suffering than the prolonged suffering that a cow goes through for giving us milk; hence, in terms of suffering for the animal, milk is more himsak than meat. In my opinion, both are equally cruel and torturous to the animal.

Please note: the reader should not assume that all milk production in general today is humane and ahimsak anywhere in the world. What is true about milk production in India is also true in nearly every part of the world.

IS MILK NECESSARY FOR THE HUMAN BODY?

Other than a mother's own milk, the use of any animal's milk (for example, milk from cows, goats, or camels) is not necessary for the human body. In Indian culture, there is too much fixation on the use of milk and milk products. Today, several diseases in humans can be traced directly to the consumption of animal milk.

There is no evidence to show that milk users have longer life span than those who do not consume milk (vegans). In fact, the reverse may be true.

Out of all the species in this universe, human beings are the only ones who drink the milk of another species.

Cultures in the East, including China, Taiwan, Korea and perhaps Japan, for a long time never had cows and hence there was no culture of the use of milk and milk products. And so, there were no food recipes that called for milk in those countries. In spite of this, their life span is not less than that of milk-consuming Indians.

I am not sure if the use of milk in abhisheks, mahamastikabhisheks, poojas, and prakshals in Jain temples can any longer be considered meritorious and can be justified on any religious and spiritual grounds. In fact, these practices add to environmental pollution, odors, and himsa all around.

According to a recent news item from PCRM (the Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine), all animal proteins, including milk are bad for human bones. According to the recent study by Johns Hopkins University: "Milk causes the body to produce mucus, especially in the gastro-intestinal tract. Cancer feeds on mucus. By cutting off milk and substituting with unsweetened soy milk, cancer cells are starved."

It is shocking to realize that each year, approximately 58 billion animals—at least eight times the entire population of all human beings on this planet—including cows, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs, turkeys, chickens, and other innocent,

sentient animals —are killed in the world's factory farms and slaughterhouses to produce meat, eggs, and dairy for human consumption.

For centuries, specifically Jains have protected and cared for animals by establishing many animal and bird sanctuaries (panjrapoles) and hospitals in India.

However, recent technological advances have created a new environment for violence not visible to common people. The use and abuse of animals raised for slaughter far exceeds our imagination. The cruelty to dairy cows and other animals has reached its peak behind the walls of dairy farms and slaughterhouses. It is a sad picture of the innocent, dumb and defenseless creatures that are subjected to cruel pain far from the human eyes. The thought itself makes one's heart bleed with anguish and grief. There is so much suffering going on in this world behind the curtain that it is kept a highly guarded secret. How long shall we pretend that animals have no soul and so it feels no pain. Is it not the time to wake up from our slumber and find the truth and stop being violent and act to end the cruelty that is meted on the dumb and innocent creatures? Violence begets violence and love begets love.

DEBATE ABOUT THE USE OF MILK & DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY- MY PERSONAL APPEAL

During the last few years, I have received hundreds of emails from Jains, mostly in North America and in India, on the subject of consuming dairy products. I have also talked to a few sadhus. Frankly, I must admit that majority of the email and feedback (more than 75%) are in favor of the use of milk and dairy products in food and in poojas. In fact, quite a few have justified its use.

I realize that old habits, customs, and traditions, especially those prevalent over thousands of years are extremely difficult to change. Still, with the facts and data about how

milk is produced today (not in the past), I humbly submit the following for consideration by the Jain community.

- Rational, critical, and factual debate is healthy and must continue;
- We must look at each viewpoint from an anekantavad perspective;
- At the minimum, we should admit that today (and I stress again, today) the production of milk the world over is full of untold cruelty and suffering for the producers of milk—the cow and her children;
- Milk is a product of himsa and it has clear footprints of himsa;
- Mr. Atul Gandhi; a Jain in USA calls milk as “Liquid Meat”
- Wherever possible and feasible, the Jain community must start the journey to reduce the consumption of milk and dairy products. The thousand mile journey starts with the first step; and,
- If we don’t do that, then “ahimsa” will just become an empty slogan.

Happily, there are many non-violent alternatives. Instead of cow’s milk, one might try delicious, healthy, and cholesterol-free soy milk, rice milk, pecan milk or almond milk and available in many flavors, these options can be found in nearly every major grocery store. Better still, one can purchase a soy milk-making machine; these allow users to create their own soy and other milk at home. In India, soy milk is readily available in supermarkets and from Godrej Products and several other distributors.

As for other non-dairy products, companies such as Tofutti, So Delicious, Soy Cream, and Rice Dream all make rich, tempting ice cream. Tofutti also makes sour cream and cream cheese, Soy Garden makes a healthful non-dairy butter, and there are numerous non-dairy cheeses too. Remember, all of these alternatives are guaranteed to be non-violent as well.

The easiest, most effective, and most important thing you can do to stop this cruelty, is to buy alternatives to dairy products. With the abundance of choices nowadays, it is becoming easier and easier to remove cruelty from your diet.

For vegan recipes, visit vegweb.com, vegcooking.com, or simply Google away. There are thousands of different recipes online, for every cuisine or taste imaginable.

One can make at home very delicious youghurt and ice creams from Soy Milk. We have been doing it for many years.

Many celebrities and famous artists have embraced the vegan lifestyle and commitment to cruelty-free food; these include: Joaquin Phoenix, Jessica Biel, Orlando Bloom, Alicia Silverstone, Natalie Portman, Liv Tyler, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jennifer Connelly, Elizabeth Berkley, Woody Harrelson, AFI, Common, Benji and Billy of the band Good Charlotte, Weird Al, Thom Yorke, Fiona Apple, Erykah Badu, Moby, Shania Twain, Fugazi, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Dennis Kucinich, President Bill Clinton and former US Vice President Al Gore, Chelsie Clinton (daughter of President Clinton) and many more.

Resources, and for more information visit:

www.veganoutreach.org

www.pcrm.org

www.factoryfarming.com

www.viva.org.uk

www.peta.org

*"Unseen they suffer, unheard they cry.
In agony they linger, in silence they die.
Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?"
- Anonymous*



These lines above express the pain and suffering of the animals that are being exploited and tortured for the need of the human greed.

Now you decide; is this consistent with Ahimsa.

JAINISM AND VEGANISM: AHIMSA IN THE MODERN WORLD

Veganism is embraced by some, misunderstood by many, and resisted by others in the Jain community. And yet, the primary tenet of Jainism is ahimsa. Bhagwan Mahavir's message in the Acharanga Sutra is clear, "all breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away."

The central philosophy of Jainism and veganism are not only similar, but also complimentary. In pursuit of an ahimsak life, Jains should respect and embrace veganism.

According to the Vegan Society of the UK, "a vegan is someone who tries to live without exploiting animals, for the benefit of animals, people and the planet. Vegans eat a plant-based diet, with nothing coming from animals—no meat, milk, eggs or honey, for example. A vegan lifestyle also avoids leather, wool, silk, pearl and other animal products."

Donald Watson, of the Vegan Society, was the first to combine the beginning and end of the word "vegetarian," symbolizing that veganism is the logical conclusion of the vegetarian journey to avoid animal suffering and death; he coined the word "vegan" in 1944.

Vegans recognize that as an ethical matter, milk, even "organic" or "humane" milk is inherently a product of violence. Some people believe that milk production in India is still humane but the truth is otherwise. If you are not sure about this, use the Internet to conduct independent research, visit a dairy farm, or read about it in Pravin K. Shah's *My Visit to a Dairy Farm*, which is archived in the Jain collection at Harvard University and can be found online at:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/affiliates/jainism/ahimsa/dairy.htm>

A few years ago, I along with quite a few Jains (from different parts of USA and Canada) visited a dairy farm in the State of

Vermont (USA) and saw with our own eyes the cruelty and suffering that we been reading so often. This is true.

To review, the meat and milk industries are inextricably linked; they are two sides of the same violent coin. The cost of beef is subsidized by the sale of milk and leather. All livestock in a dairy farm are predestined for the slaughterhouse: newborn male calves for veal within six months of birth and the remaining female cows when, by the age of five years, milk production starts to decrease. The natural life span of a cow is more than twenty years.

Dairy cows are often fed ground up fish and bone, routinely injected with hormones, repeatedly impregnated for continuous milk production and separated from their calves very shortly after birth. There can be no doubt that the production of dairy, however “humane” we may try to make it, will always involve violence to five-sensed creatures (Panchandriyas). Moreover, milk production is a tremendous burden on the environment; it takes a great deal of grain, water and energy to produce dairy products, and there are many harmful consequences of waste and pollution that result.

Some Jains point to scriptures that indicate that Tirthankaras consumed some milk products. It must be remembered, however, at that time there was no intensive or “factory” farming. Moreover, at that time, there were no mass distribution systems or storage systems for grains and other agricultural products. So taking small amounts of locally produced fresh dairy products may have represented the minimum amount of himsa necessary given conditions then. Cows were treated as revered members of the family and oxen were used in farming. The animals were not killed even when they stopped producing milk or stopped working in the fields. We cannot be certain of all the conditions of those days but we know for sure that things are very different now.

According to Jain theory, milk and milk products are considered Vigayee or Maha-Vigavee and are prohibited during Ayambil.

Therefore, eliminating (or minimizing) the use of milk or milk products is not such a strange or alien concept to Jains.

There are now convenient and tasty substitutes for milk, ice cream, yogurt, butter and ghee, as well as alternatives to things like leather, silk, wool, and pearls. Also, we must keep in mind the health benefits of veganism; the American Dietetic Association has a position paper that explains how vegan diets help manage and reduce chronic degenerative disease like heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and obesity. Although vegan ideals are becoming more common among Jain youth, the older, more tradition-minded generation resists it.

We have to examine the himsa footprints in everything we consume. The theories behind veganism are closest to Jain ideals and a step ahead of just being vegetarian. Veganism is a natural expression and expansion of our highest ideals of ahimsa. There is no other life style that comes closer to the Jain philosophy of non-violence as ethical veganism does. When we understand the true basis of their belief as Jiv Daya, we must develop respect for their commitment and embrace vegans as our soul mates.

EMERGING TRENDS: Veganism in America

Veganism is a growing trend within the vegetarian community and is considered a stricter form of vegetarianism. The Huffington post report predicts that: “No Lie Can Live Forever: Predicting a Vegan America by 2050”, Vegetarian Times Study Shows 7.3 Million Americans Are Vegetarians and an additional 22.8 Million follow a Vegetarian-Inclined Diet. Approximately 1 million, of those are vegans, who consume no animal products at all. In addition, 10 percent of U.S., adults, or 22.8 million people, say they largely follow a vegetarian-inclined diet.

Outside the non-Jain community, there are vegan societies and vegan restaurants all over. In Houston where I live, there is a thriving Vegan Society with scores of programs every year

and a major VEG-FEST in June every year which is attended by at least 3000- 5000 people. In 2013, my family and I went to Guatemala in Central America and even there we ate at many vegan restaurants in many cities and towns.

Hundreds of vegan cookbooks and web sites are easily available.

Fortunately quite many Jains in India, USA, Canada, and the UK have started changing their food habits and lifestyle to veganism. I know of many Jains now who are pure vegans.

The Center for Jain Studies at Claremont Lincoln University, in Claremont, California, USA, served pure Jain vegan meals during its all programs.

At the JAINA conventions, at least one day all the meals are vegan and even otherwise vegan meals are freely available every day. Recently JAINA and many Jain Centers in North America have started one day in October/ November time frame as Vegan Day.

The YJA (Young Jains of America) convention also offers vegan meals.

Finally, please note;

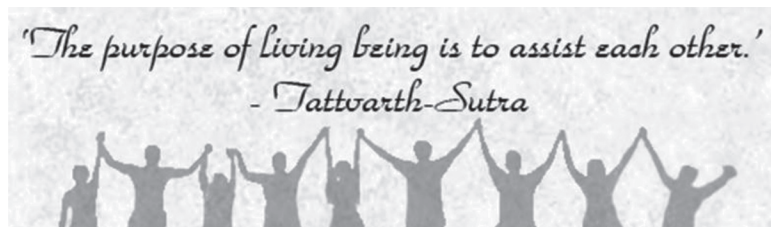
The dichotomy between dairy and meat in our culture is absolutely false. The reality is that meat and dairy farming are two parts of the same enterprise, both completely dependent on each other. Just a few key facts prove this point:

- Over 21,000,000 (21 million) unwanted calves born to dairy cows are sold to the meat industry every year globally.
- Over 6 billion male chicks are killed every year by hatcheries and become “filler” in processed meats for human consumption and blended into animal feed.
- Over 3 million spent dairy cows (those who are no longer optimally producing milk) or one-third of the entire U.S. herd of 9 million, are sent to slaughter each year and are

transformed into products for the meat industry to sell and profit on.

Make no mistake. Dairy is deadly.

NOW YOU DECIDE!



OTHER FOOD ITEMS TO AVOID COMPLETELY

THE USE OF EGGS IN FOOD & FOOD PRODUCTS

When I was born, this question was nonexistent in the Jain community, but not anymore. Every day, I see some Jains using eggs either as a food itself or in many prepared and ready to use food items such as cakes, pastries, cookies, ice cream, and some breads, including Indian-made naan and roomali roti served in restaurants. These days, it is not uncommon to see the use of eggs containing cakes at special occasions (for example, weddings or anniversaries) by Jain families. I personally have never eaten such cakes or pastries. Today, eggless cakes are readily available in many places in North America and other countries and they are just as tasty, if not more so .

Since there are two types of eggs available these days—fertilized and unfertilized—some Jains have also posed the question, “What is wrong in using unfertilized eggs?”

I admit that I am not an expert on eggs and types of eggs in the market but Fertilized eggs are eggs that are the product of natural conception between a male chicken and a female chicken; the egg in this case bears life, and would become a chick in due time if not taken and eaten. An unfertilized egg is laid by a female chicken (a hen), but without having been

inseminated by a male chicken; in this case, the egg does not contain the embryo of a young chicken. However, when we use unfertilized eggs, we are still committing stealing what belongs to another creature. Additionally, we are keeping the hens in a kind of permanent slavery to harvest their eggs, and so consume what they produce in suffering.

The Incredible, Inedible Egg: FOOTPRINTS OF HIMSA.

On factory egg farms, egg laying hens are housed in intensive confinement buildings where up to 100,000 birds are crammed into a single warehouse in stacked rows of bare wire cells called “battery cages.” Four to six laying hens are crowded into each cage, each of about the size of a folded newspaper, unable to stretch their wings, walk, or even roost. Because of this inability, hens’ feet frequently grow directly around the bare wire of their cages.

To reduce stress-induced pecking and fighting resulting from over-crowding, the hens’ beaks are painfully severed at the tip. This delicate tissue is amputated without the use of anesthesia, using a hot knife or a crude guillotine-like device. De-beaking causes excruciating pain and severe shock and frequently results in death.

Hens are also forced to undergo a production process known as “forced molting.” This common egg industry practice involves denying the birds’ food and water for days on end in order to shock their systems into another egg laying cycle. Ultimately, this destroys a hen’s immune system and greatly increases the risk of salmonella contamination of her eggs.

A hen in a natural environment might live to be fifteen to twenty years old, In contrast, a factory hen, at the age of just eighteen months, when she is no longer capable of producing eggs at the rate required to be lucrative for the business, like her sister the dairy cow, will meet her demise in the abyss of the slaughterhouse. Here she will be ground into pet food or boiled for chicken soup.

Many people naively view dairy and egg production as less abusive than meat production because milk and eggs do not necessitate the immediate deaths of the cows and chickens that produce them. Clearly, dairy and egg farms are not innocuous industries as so many of us have been led to believe. Their alliance with animal abuse and slaughter is inextricable and undeniable.

But What About “Humane” Farms and “Free-Range” Eggs?

Although “free-range” hens are generally given slightly more space to live in than hens kept in battery cages, there is no uniform, industry standard defining how “free-range” hens must be housed. The hens may simply be put into larger cages than their sisters who live on factory farms. In addition, it is common for “free-range” layers to be de-beaked just like battery cage layers. But even if “free-range” hens were given all the space they could use and an environment in which they could fulfill normal social and behavioral needs, they will still be killed for meat when their egg production rates drop off, usually after just one or two years. And, like other “free-range” animals, they are subjected to the horrors of abusive handling, transportation, and slaughter.

It is a myth that “free-range” poultry and egg production is separate from industrial animal production. All forms of animal production are economically related. For example, many small farms buy their birds from mega-industrial factory-farm hatcheries such as Murray McMurray in Iowa. McMurray alone ships 100,000 chicks each week to buyers. “Free-range” producers have joined together with the U.S. Postal Service, cock-fighters and other vested interests to force the airlines to ship baby chicks like luggage, because it is cheapest.

Millions of chicks die en-route of starvation, dehydration, and terror. Despite the factory-farm connection and total inhumanity involved, Polyface Farm owner Joel Salatin speaks for the “free-range” lobby: “We small independent producers rely on that transport. It’s our very lifeblood.” He continues,

saying, “People have a soul; animals don’t. Unlike us, animals are not created in God’s image.”

WHAT IS THE FATE OF MALE CHICKS?

Another problem inherent with all egg production involves the disposal of unwanted male chicks at the hatchery. Because male chicks won’t eventually lay eggs and because these breeds (as opposed to broilers, raised specifically for the production of meat) of chickens don’t grow fast enough to be raised profitably for meat, the baby male chicks are discarded shortly after hatching. There is no incentive for producers to spend time and money to euthanize these chicks, which they consider to be a liability. Hence, male chicks are killed by the cheapest and easiest means available. Typically these methods include suffocation or being ground up alive. All egg hatcheries commit these atrocities whether they provide hens for factory farms or “free-range” farms.

Recently I came across the following information about the Egg industry;

Twelve Egg Facts the Industry Doesn’t Want You to Know;
By [Free From Harm Staff Writers](#) | [July 29, 2014](#)

Male chicks are most commonly suffocated or ground up alive.

Consider the following 12 egg facts, most of which are common to all forms of egg farming:

1. The global egg industry destroys 6 Billion newborn male chicks every year.
2. Male chicks born to egg-laying hens cannot lay eggs, and are not the breed used for meat. Hatcheries separate males from females through a process known as “sexing.” Since males are worthless to the egg industry, they are disposed of like trash, either suffocated to death or ground up alive in large industrial macerators.
3. Eggs sold under organic, free-range, and humane labels,

and even chicks sold to backyard chicken keepers, also have their origins in these killing hatcheries.

4. Newborn chicks are more intelligent, alert, and aware of their environment than human toddlers, according to recent scientific studies. In fact, many traits that were previously thought to be exclusive to human / primate communication, cognition and social behavior have now been discovered in chickens.
5. Female chicks are sent to egg farms, where, due to decades of genetic manipulation and selective breeding, they produce 250 to 300 eggs per year. In nature, wild hens lay only 10 to 15 eggs annually. Like all birds, they lay eggs only during breeding season and only for the purpose of reproducing.
6. This unnaturally high rate of egg-laying results in frequent disease and mortality.
7. 95% of all egg-laying hens in the U.S. – nearly 300 million birds – spend their lives in battery cages so small they cannot even stretch their wings. Packed in at 5–10 birds per cage, they can only stand or crouch on the cages’ hard wires, which cut their feet painfully. In these maddening conditions, hens will peck one another from stress, causing injury and even death.
8. Rather than give them more room, farmers cut off a portion of their sensitive beaks without painkiller. A chicken’s beak is loaded with nerve endings, more sensitive than a human fingertip. Many birds die of shock on the spot.
9. Most hens on “cage-free” or “free range” operations are also debeaked, as these labels allow producers to confine thousands of birds inside crowded sheds.
10. In a natural environment, chickens can live 10 to 15 years, but chickens bred for egg-laying are slaughtered, gassed or even thrown live onto “dead piles” at just 12 to 18 months of age when their egg production declines.

11. During transport, chickens are roughly stuffed into crates and suffer broken legs and wings, lacerations, hemorrhage, dehydration, heat stroke, hypothermia, and heart failure; millions die before reaching the slaughterhouse.

In the “kill cone” method, considered the most “humane” form of slaughter, fully conscious birds are stuffed down cones and have their necks slit while they thrash and cry out.

12. At the slaughterhouse, most chickens bred for egg-laying are still conscious when their throats are slit, and their hearts are still beating as the blood drains out of their mouths. Millions of chickens worldwide are still conscious when plunged into the scalding tank for feather removal. They drown while being boiled alive.

What Can You Do? There are delicious and “just like the real thing” plant-based alternatives for every egg dish, from scrambles and omelets to quiche and sunny side ups. It’s also very easy to replace eggs in baking.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF EATING EGGS ON HUMAN HEALTH?

Eggs are a major source of cholesterol, and can lead to high blood cholesterol; this is a leading factor and a major factor in health risks. Alternatively, baking with applesauce, prune puree, or silken tofu—for some examples—provides the binding action of eggs without the negative health consequences. Some say that eggs provide a singular source of protein, however, we know that a variety of legumes, vegetables, and grains also provide protein, with none of the cholesterol or violence to chickens.

The Dalai Lama Condemns Cage Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens.

His holiness Dalai Lama says, “The abuse we inflict on hens has always been particularly disturbing to me and I have always been particularly concerned toward how these animals are

treated in industrial food production. I am troubled to learn about the practice of confining egg laying hens in tiny cages. In these cages, birds cannot engage in their natural behaviors, such as spreading their wings, laying eggs in a nesting area, perching, scratching at the ground, even standing on a solid surface. Each hen has less space to live than the very sheet of paper I have written this letter on. Turning these defenseless animals into egg-producing machines with no consideration for their welfare whatsoever is a degradation of our own humanity.”

“Why Eggs are a Himsak Product,” by Dilip Shah, Past JAINA President, Philadelphia, USA.

“Before we even get to the question of if egg belongs on our plate, I would like to discuss how eggs get to our shopping basket.

Most of the eggs coming to markets are a product of large-scale chicken farms. These farms are in an extremely competitive business. Cutting costs and maximizing the production is the Mantra for the operators of these farms.

1. In chicken farms as in nature, all births are nearly equal in gender. 50% male and 50% female. Newborn male chicks are of no value to egg production. The operators of these farms either destroy them (by gassing or crushing) or sell them to the slaughterhouse. So egg consumption necessitates sacrifice of 50% of chicks.
2. Eggs are taken from the cages, which is a form of stealing when chickens are unaware and unable to protect their eggs - A chicken never consents to give up the egg. In fact in a free environment chicken will fight to death to save its egg.
3. For economic production, chickens are kept all their life in battery cages. Each cage is about 8 1/2” x 11”. They can never roam freely or even turn around. Yes, these days there is a talk of freerange chicken where chickens do have

some freedom of roaming, sunlight etc. But the first two points above apply to them too.

4. Chickenfeed is a big business—the feed is fortified with chemicals, growth hormones, etc. for maximum meat production. Stress from a lifetime of confinement and diet designed solely for maximizing their weight all adds up to bad karma for the consumers of eggs.

Once you evaluate the eggs as product of violence and stealing, you can stop at bringing them to your shopping basket and never worry about consuming them.”

In short, the facts about egg production and consumption include:

No matter what kind of eggs, fertilized or unfertilized and from caged hens or cage-free hens, they all come from hens (a hen is the source) and they are subjected to unlimited cruelty. Thus, all eggs are a product of himsa both directly and indirectly.

Eggs are not necessary for health. In fact, eating eggs is cause for many human diseases.

The production of eggs in India is no different as far as treatment and cruelty to hens. In fact, it may be even worse.

Fortunately, there are many products that can easily replace the use of eggs in cooking; these cooking tips include:

EGG-FREE BAKING TIPS

- **Vinegar and Baking Soda:** For a rising or lightening effect in cakes, cupcakes and breads, combine 1 teaspoon of baking soda with 1 tablespoon of vinegar.
- **Ground Flaxseed:** Rich in essential omega-3 fatty acids, 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed whisked with 3 tablespoons of water in a blender or food processor will replace one egg. Flaxseed works best in nutty, grainy items like pancakes, waffles, bran muffins and oatmeal cookies.

- Bananas: For its binding abilities, half of a potassium and magnesium rich mashed or pureed banana will generally replace one or two eggs in breads, muffins, cakes and pancakes.
- Applesauce: Full of fiber and vitamin C, unsweetened applesauce offers the binding and moisture needed in baked goods. 1/4 cup equals one egg. Applesauce works best when you want the results to be moist, as in brownies.
- Silken Tofu: Rich in protein and fiber, but without the cholesterol and little, if any, saturated fat, this soy-based ingredient works best in dense, moist cakes and brownies. One egg can be replaced with 1/4 cup of tofu whipped in a blender or food processor.
- ENER-G Egg Replacer: Available in a handy box in most food stores, this nonperishable powdered product works well in baking, but is best in cookies.

Adapted from Rhode Island Vegan Awareness from The Joy of Vegan Baking: The Compassionate Cooks' Traditional Treats and Sinful Sweets, by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau, 2007.

The decision is yours: is this behavior surrounding egg production and consumption consistent with ahimsa? You Decide.

THE USE OF HONEY BY JAINS

Many Jains and nearly all vegans avoid the use of honey because it is an animal product that involves himsa to the insects (bees) that produce honey. It is reasonable to draw an analogy to milk production.

In fact, just like milk, honey is the dairy of the insect world.

Today, there are hundreds of medicinal and eatable products (including many cereals, cookies, biscuits, juices, and spreads) that contain honey.

Honey can be produced by honeybees in the wild or in honeybee farms, but most honey comes from full-time factory

bee farmers. The bees swallow nectar into their crop, regurgitate it, add enzymes (in their saliva), chew, swallow, and repeat many times. This is neither a pretty nor appetizing picture.

In the course of cultivating repeated hives, humans select a successor queen instead of allowing the reigning queen to continue. Both of these are likely to have been artificially inseminated. Beekeepers replace the queen every two years, instead of allowing her to live out her natural life and reign. “Replace” is a euphemism for killing the old queen. Backyard beekeepers also regularly kill their queens. This is done for numerous reasons that all boil down to exerting control over the hive. For example, it is done to prevent swarming, aggression, mite infestation, and to keep honey production at a maximum. For backyard or small-scale beekeepers, queens come from commercial queen suppliers and during their shipment, nearly anything can happen. Queens can be over heated, chilled, left out in the sun for hours (desiccated), banged about, and killed.

There is often a lack of regard for the bees’ lives. In the US, 10 to 20 percent of colonies are lost over the winter. This is partly by accident and partly on purpose. Some beekeepers kill off their hives before winter. This practice can make economic sense. Unfortunately, this is not done by the small backyard beekeeper, but rather by the large factory bee farmer, so a lot of bees are killed even if most beekeepers don’t use the practice. Also, in the process of checking up on the hive and taking the honey, some bees get squashed by the farmers or stepped on. Bees who sting the keeper in defense of their home necessarily die. If two colonies are combined, the queen of the weaker colony is killed. So that the honey can be easily removed from the comb, it is often warmed prior to removal. In the warming room, bees find themselves trapped with no escape, and either die naturally or are “disposed” of by beekeepers.

There is no doubt that beekeeping, like dairy farming, is cruel and exploitative. The bees are forced to construct their honeycombs in racks of trays, according to a human-made

design that standardizes the size of each hexagonal chamber. Queens are imprisoned in certain parts of the hive, while colonies are split to increase production and sprinkled with prophylactic antibiotics. In the meantime, keepers control the animals by pumping their hives full of smoke, which masks the scent of their alarm pheromones and keeps them from defending their homes and honey stores. And, of course, since the bees aren't making the honey for us, our removal of it from the hive could be construed as a form of theft. Real maple syrup is a good alternative.

Anyone who eats honey but avoids milk is making the tacit assumption that the pain experienced by a bee counts for something less than the pain experienced by a cow which is a fallacy. A bee feels no less pain than any other animal or insect.

Clearly honey is a product of himsa.

You can make a difference. Of course it's not always enough to avoid eating something. Why not let companies know you're not buying their products because they have honey in them? This is a particularly urgent issue in the "health food" area since there are an increasing number of products containing honey that would otherwise be vegan.

You decide; is use of honey consistent with ahimsa?

THE USE OF PROCESSED AND REFINED SUGAR

Sugar and other sweeteners: do they contain animal products?

The answer to this question is very complex. Carolina Pyevich provided the following clues in *Vegetarian Journal*, while doing an internship with the Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG).

According to Pyevich, refined sugar is avoided by many vegetarians because its processing may involve a bone char filter. The activated filter decolorizes sugar to make it white through an absorption process. Bone char filter is used by some major sugar companies, but not necessarily by all. Other filters may include

granular carbon, a pressure lead filter, or an ion exchange system. Granular carbon has a wood or coal base, and the ion exchange does not require the use of any animal products. Bones from cows are the only bones used to make bone char.

Two major types of refined sugar produced in the United States are beet sugar and cane sugar. They both are nutritionally equivalent, and one cannot usually taste any difference between them. They are both composed of sucrose. The production and sale of each type are approximately equal.

Beet sugar refineries never use bone char filter, because beet sugar does not require an extensive decolorizing procedure. It is refined with a pressure lead filter and an ion exchange system. Beet sugar is often labeled “granulated sugar.” It is becoming more prevalent in the U.S. because the federal government subsidizes it. But Jainism would not accept beets, because they are root vegetable.

On the other hand, almost all the cane sugar requires the use of a specific filter to decolorize the sugar and absorb inorganic material from it. The filter may be bone char, granular carbon, or an ion exchange system.

Domino, the largest sugar manufacturer in USA, uses bone char in the filtration process. The cane refineries of Savannah Foods, the second largest sugar manufacturer, also use bone char. California and Hawaiian (C&H) Sugar employs bone char filters as well as granular carbon and ion exchange filters. All these companies use the bone char in the refining process of brown sugar, powdered sugar (sugar mixed with corn starch), and white sugar.

Refined Sugar, producers of Jack Frost Sugar, uses a granular carbon. Florida Crystal sugar is a cane sugar that has not passed through the bone, either.

Some labels of sugar packages seem to indicate that the product is “raw sugar,” but all commercial sugar has undergone some refining. Genuine raw sugar, according to FDA regulations, is unfit for human consumption.

Turbinado sugar is made by separating raw cane sugar crystals in a centrifuge and washing them with steam. It retains its brown color. C&H produces “Washed Raw Sugar,” without passing it through bone char.

Brown sugar is basically refined sugar with added molasses. It could have been refined with bone char.

Molasses is derived from sugar cane. Beet sugar molasses is too bitter for human consumption. Molasses syrup does not go through any filter, because there is no need to eliminate the brown color. This sweetener may sometimes be non-vegetarian, because the process of making it requires an agent to reduce its foam by adding a small amount of fat to the liquid. This fat is a complex issue. Traditionally, lard has been used. Pork is hung over a tub of maple syrup, and drops of fat fall into the syrup. Milk, cream, butter, or vegetable oil also could have been used for that process.

Most maple syrup manufacturers now use vegetable oil or synthetic defoamers instead of lard. But one commercial defoamer, Atmos300K, contains glycerides derived from “edible meat and/or vegetable sources.” Thus, it is difficult to determine whether a particular brand has an animal or vegetable based defoamer.

Kosher certified brands, such as Spring Tree or Maple Groves, are unlikely to contain animal products in their defoamers. Holsum Foods, which produces pancake syrup, uses vegetable oil for defoaming. Their products are labeled by food chains such as Dominick’s, Supervalu, and Superfine.

Conclusion: Turbinado sugar and molasses are the best choices for avoiding himsa in one’s sweeteners.

You decide; is its use consistent with Ahimsa?

SABOODANA (SAGO): A NON-VEGETARIAN FOOD-FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

In Tamil Nadu, India, on the road from Salem to Coimbatore there are many saboodana factories. One begins to smell a

terrible smell about two kilometers away from the factories. Saboodana is made from the root-like sweet potato. Common to Kerala, each root weighs about six kilograms. Factory owners buy these roots in bulk in season, pulp them, and put into pits of about forty feet by twenty-five feet.

These pits are in the open ground and the pulp—thousands of tons of roots—is allowed to rot in the open air for several months. Throughout the night, the pits are lit by huge electric bulbs and millions of insects are attracted to the light, killed, and fall into the pits.

While the pulp is rotting, water is added every day. Due to this, two inch long white eels, like pests, are born automatically in the gutters. The walls of the pits are covered by millions of these eels; factory owners, with the help of machines, crush the pulp along with the eels, which also become paste.



This action is repeated many times during the five to six month rotting process.

The pulp is thus ready as roots and millions and millions of pests and insects are crushed and ground together. This paste is then passed through round mesh and made into small balls and then polished. This is saboodana.

Now I know why many people don't eat saboodana, rightly treating it as non-vegetarian. If you find it appropriate and if you think after reading this one cannot relish saboodana, pass on to those whom you want to save from this tasty food. Information source: Surendra Kumar Suri, Kandivali, West Mumbai 400067.

Disclaimer: Some people may tell me that there are many ways of making Saboodana and what I described is the old process. May be the modern process used in factories today is not as himsak. I don't know.

You decide; is the use of saboodana consistent with the practice of ahimsa?

THE USE OF SILVER FOIL (VARAK) ON FOOD

Should Jains use silver foil (varak) in Indian sweets and on other food items?

In India, during the last few decades, a new menace has begun. This is the use of a very thin, silver foil called varak that is applied to the outside surface of several edible items including Indian sweets, some fruits, betanrut (paan) and some Ayurvedic medicines (as an ingredient). Varak is also used in flavored syrups as in kesar (saffron) syrup. Silver foil adds only glitter (nothing more) to the edible items. The silver-topped sweet is even served as prashad (holy offerings) in many temples and on auspicious and religious occasions. Strangely enough the same silver varak is also used to decorate the Shwetambar Jain pratimas (idols) in the temples.

Varak is highly toxic and poisonous to the health, makes an edible product tasteless and more expensive (because of the added cost and the labor involved in applying the varak to the edible product) and does nothing to enhance the taste. What is even more shocking is that the varak is non-vegetarian and its production process involves killing of specially selected live five-sensed animals.

Varak is not only dirty, but it is also non-vegetarian. Even meat-eaters do not eat intestines, which are used in its production. The use of these foils turns even sweets into non-vegetarian food. A few years ago Indian Airlines learned about this, and have since stopped using varak on the sweets served in their planes and issued instructions to its suppliers to supply sweets without silver varak.

If you keenly observe this varak under a microscope, don't be perturbed if you happen to see traces of animal skin, hair, blood, meat, the stools and saliva of cattle or oxen—varak is made by hammering thin sheets of silver in between

layers of bulls' intestines. In other words, after slaughtering a bull, quickly his intestines are removed, and sold to the manufacturers of silver foil/ varak. The skins made of old intestines are of no use. Even one-day-old intestines cannot be used, because within a few hours they stiffen.

The silver foil/varak manufacturer removes blood and stool (if not pre-removed) from the intestines, and cuts them into pieces. Then he puts one piece over another, making a booklet out of them. At his home, or in the factory, he puts one silver (or gold) sheet in between each page of these intestines. 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, nor they let the foil sheets move around inside. Because of the hammering, some tissues of the intestine mix with the foils. Afterwards, the foil manufacturer sells the bundle of foil to the sweets manufacturers. Some small foil manufacturers sell the foils to temples.

Not only is varak non-vegetarian, it is also very bad for your body - whether you are vegetarian or not. The silver cannot be digested; therefore, there are no benefits from its consumption. A study done in November 2005 by the Industrial Toxicology Research Centre in Lucknow on varak says that the silver foil available in the market has toxic and carcinogenic metals in the thin silver foil, including nickel, lead, chromium, and cadmium; all of these damage the body. Also, over half of the analyzed silver foil had lower silver purity than the 99.9 per cent purity stipulated by the prevention of food adulteration act of India. When such foil enters into the body, it releases heavy metals that can lead to cancer. The report also details the unhygienic conditions in which workers put silver in small leather bags and beat it into foil in filthy shops.

My brothers and sisters, I cannot understand this fad about its use on edible products. Not only you are eating a non-vegetarian product, but also for no reason you are putting poison in your body and are paying for it.

The use of varak in Jain temple cannot be justified on any grounds. By its use we are wrapping the holy and sacred Jain pratimas (idols) with meat and blood and destroying the sanctity of the pratimas. I ask, why? When will we wake up?

Contrary to many claims in India, to the best of my knowledge, no, and I repeat —no silver varak is made by machines and without the use of leather skins in the process. All processes involve animal parts.

A Personal Account:

In India hardly any sweet is available anymore without silver varak. Many years ago, I took a vow not to eat, buy, accept, or offer to others anything containing silver varak. I know it is a little inconvenient to find shops that sell sweets without varak but I will not buy anything else.

I talk about this choice all the time in India amongst my relatives and some look at me and think I am crazy and ignore me no matter how much I say. Still, I have been successful in convincing a few who have stopped its use, but this number is very small. I find the use of varak-covered sweets very prevalent in Jain homes.

About ten years ago, I attended a Jain wedding of a close relative of mine in India. At the end of the ceremony, the father of the bride offered me a box of some sweets. The box was fully covered with packaging so I could not see what was inside. I asked the host if the box had any silver covered sweets (which I suspected). The host said yes. In spite of my telling him that I would not touch any varak covered sweets; he kept on insisting and forced the box in my lap. As soon as he was gone, I went inside the storage room where hundreds of such boxes were stored and deposited my box there. He saw me doing this and came to me to tell me that it was rude and insulting on my part that I did so. Very politely I explained to him that I am sorry, but that I had no use for it except to throw it into the garbage—which I didn't want to do, but he would not understand.

Brothers and sisters, such is the state of affairs.

The following additional information about the varak industry comes from an extensive and well-researched article written by Mrs. Menaka Gandhi; now the cabinet minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet in India.

“In India, by law, every food item has to have a green dot on it, if it is vegetarian, and a maroon dot, if it is non-vegetarian. If a manufacturer is found to be cheating by mislabeling his product, the sentence is many years in jail. So, why have the mithai (sweets) people not been arrested so far? Milk has been treated as vegetarian to appease the powerful dairy lobby, but the silver foil on each mithai cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered vegetarian”.

Beauty without Cruelty, a Pune-based NGO that investigates product ingredients, has produced a remarkable booklet on the varak industry. Here is their report on how it is made.

“The varakh-makers select animals at the slaughterhouse. Each animal is felt for the softness of its skin before it is killed. This means that a substantial number of goat, sheep, and cattle are killed specifically for the industry. Their skins are soaked in filthy, infested vats for few days to dehair them. Then, workers peel away the epidermal layer, which they call jhilli, just under the top layer of the skin in a single piece. These layers are soaked for 30 minutes in another decoction to soften them and left to dry on wooden boards. Once these are dry, the workers cut out square pieces 19 cm by 15 cm. These pieces are made into pouches called auzaar and stacked into booklets. Each booklet has a cover of thick lamb suede called khol. Thin strips of silver called alagaa are placed inside the pouches. Workers now hit the booklet with wooden mallets for three hours to beat the silver inside into the ultra-thin varakh of a thickness less than one micron called “999.” This varakh is then sent to sweet shops.”

Here are the statistics that you should know. An (one) animal's skin can only make twenty to twenty-five pieces or pouches.

Each booklet has 360 pouches. One booklet is used to make 30,000 varak pieces – much less than the daily supply of a single large mithai shop.

About 12,500 animals are killed for one kg of varakh. Every year, 30,000 kilograms of varakh (30 tons) are eaten on mithai. 25 million booklets are made by varak companies that keep their slaughterhouse connection secret. Now you can easily calculate how many animals are killed each year just for the varak. But the truth is that not only is this industry killing animals furiously, much of the animal tissue that the booklet is made of remains in the varak.

Many Jains know in their heart that varak is non-vegetarian. But they still use these dreadful items of mass destruction to decorate the idols of Jain tirthankars. How amazing that the idols of those that preached and practiced strict non-violence to all creatures should now be covered with slaughterhouse-derived silver foils. Jains (not all) do buy and use varask. Some try to bluff themselves by saying that the varak is machine-made, and no animal skin is used in its manufacture which most probably is not true. Is this practice any different than still prevalent practice of sacrifice (killing) of animals for worship and religious rituals in some Hindu temples which happens even today? Bhagwan Mahavir tirelessly worked to stop this animal sacrifice practice but his followers resorted to the same. What a mockery!

In their thorough investigation, Beauty Without Cruelty has done a thorough investigation and found that there is not a single machine-made piece of varak in India, or anywhere in the world.

On the internet, there are letters, including, for example, one from a person in Jalandhar claiming that he has a company which has “fully automatic machines manufactured with German collaboration to beat silver pieces in between a special Indian manufactured paper in a hygienic and controlled atmosphere run round the clock by qualified

Engineers and experienced R&D team.” I looked into this, but when I followed this up, no factory of the given name, or even address, was found. To them I ask, do we make sure while buying that the varaks are machine made without the use of animal skin?

The production of varak is done mainly in India, in Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, and Gaya (which is a Buddhist holy center), in Bihar, Kanpur, Meerut, and Varanasi (the holy city of Hindus) in Uttar Pradesh, and in Jaipur, Indore, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai. The leather booklets come to the production sites from the slaughterhouses of Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, and Ratlam.

It is time we refused varak-covered mithai, fruit or paan. Mithai shops should be taken to court for not labeling their products non-vegetarian before selling them. I request everyone reading this article to strictly avoid the sweets that have silver varak on them. They are purely non-vegetarian.

Other researchers, including the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) also confirms this, as do Beauty Without Cruelty” and Mrs. Maneka Gandhi’s television program, “Heads and Tails.”

In India, one estimate indicates that 275,000 kilos of varak is consumed annually. Thus, an average middle class Indian family of four consuming approximately 100 kg of sweets per year for forty years will have consumed silver foil produced with the gut of three cows and one-tenth of a cowhide! In India 275 tons of silver is transformed into varak that utilizes the intestines of 516,000 cows and the calf leather of 17,200 animals each year.

Can you imagine how many cattle and oxen are sacrificed for just a bit of taste? If you are surprised as I am, after reading this text please inform as many as possible so as to ensure that we don’t unknowingly consume beef.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

MOUTH FRESHENER-THE USE OF PAAN (BETAL-NUT)

By now, a paan-loving vegetarian may have eaten the equivalent of many miles of oxen intestines in the form of silver varak on the paan! For them, here is another piece of bad news - the chuna that they apply on paan is not vegetarian. Chuna 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 the killing of many insects. This is no different from taking life of a goat or a pig. Every being wants to live; no one likes the pain of death.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

But consistent and constant observance of ahimsa in what we eat and wear is not the end of the matter. It is just the beginning. There are many other types of himsa about which we must be concerned.

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS & AHIMSA

In addition to water, Jains also enjoy many other drinks either for health, taste, and refreshment. These may include many fruit juices, thandai (made from almonds), lemon water, milk, and lassi and chhachh (both derivatives of milk). Except for the milk-based drinks for reasons stated earlier, other drinks are okay. However, Jains must use precautions to make sure that some of the ingredients, preservatives, and food coloring in beverages are not animal or insect based. There are quite a few drinks in the market that Jains should avoid.

The use of alcohol, wine, liquor, and other intoxicating drinks, as well as drinks and edible products based on honey, are prohibited in the Jain community but lately their use and consumption not only in gatherings and parties but also at home is significantly increasing. I am aware of many homes,

celebrations, and marriages where alcoholic drinks are freely served.

Let us review the main qualities of a virtuous householder (known as the initial vratas).

Acharya Samantbhadra, in Ratnakaran shravkachar (verse 66), describes following eight qualities of a householder (non-monk or nun):

1. Following the limited (anuvarat) vow of Non-violence.
2. Following the limited (anuvarat) vow of Truth fullness.
3. Following the limited (anuvarat) vow of Non-stealing.
4. Following the limited (anuvarat) vow of Limited celibacy.
5. Following the limited (anuvarat) vow of Limiting possessions/attachments.
6. Not to consume any meat.
7. Not to consume any alcohol.
8. Not to consume any honey.

We will discuss item seven here, “Not to consume alcohol [or any mind altering substances like marijuana, cocaine, heroin or others].”

It is well known that alcohol and other mind-altering substances are bad for us we will consider their ill effects in three categories:

- a. Jain ethics.
- b. Medical issues
- c. Social issues.

Jain ethics:

Alcohol is a mind-altering drug; it is a depressant that alters mental faculties leading to decreased judgment power and memory. Jain Acharya in a book “pursharth-shiddhi-upaya” (verses 61 and 71) says that with altered mental faculty, one not only indulges in violence but will not be able to follow

any of the vows of truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, or possessiveness and neither will one be able to control the passions of anger, deceit, greed, and hatred.

Under the influence of alcohol one indulges in emotions of ego, aggression, and lust. One also has trouble with his senses; this may include feeling numb, and experiencing blurred vision trouble with hearing and other fine motor skills.

Alcohol consumption is also one of the “seven addictive bad habits,” (Sapt-vyasan) described in Jain Scriptures; these include:

1. Gambling
2. Eating meat
3. Drinking alcohol
4. Hunting
5. Prostitution/watching sexually explicit dances or movies
6. Smoking
7. Stealing

Is alcohol vegetarian?

It is well known that alcoholic beverages are made by process of fermentation; some are then filtered and preserved while others are distilled and bottled.

Jain scriptures do allow for some fermented products like yogurt to be consumed, but it is clearly defined that after forty-eight hours at room temperature, in fermented products two sensed or higher levels of life start to grow and therefore this process should be avoided.

The process of fermentation in the alcohol industry: Starter yeast culture: A small amount of grape juice, corn, or barley is mixed with yeast and in twenty-four hours, the starter is ready.

The starter is then mixed with the remaining total quantity of grape juice, corn, or barley.

For ale, fermentation takes two weeks at 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

For lager, fermentation takes six weeks at 48.2 degree Fahrenheit.

For wine, or fermentation of grape juice, the process takes four to six weeks, at room temperature or higher.

In wine-making a clarifying or refining agent is added to make wine clear by removing proteins from it. These clarifying or refining agents can include: egg whites, gelatin (from skin and connective tissue of pigs and cows), isinglass (from the bladders of sturgeon fish), casein (from milk), and benton clay. Some old Mediterranean countries use the blood of mammals for this purpose but blood is not used in either the US or France.

Organic (as mentioned above) clarifying or refining agents are used in most premium wines.

Medical issues involving consumption of alcohol:

Alcohol enters every cell it comes into contact with; alcohol dissolves in water and becomes part of the blood and each cell of the body except fat cells when consumed. With every drink of alcohol one loses 10,000 brain cells, leading to chronic memory loss and possibly Alzheimer's disease.

Alcohol causes cirrhosis of liver, esophageal cancer, pancreatitis, malnutrition, accidents, suicides, and contributes to many other diseases.

Alcohol works on brain cells leading to decreases in mental faculty in the following ways:

It enhances GABA, an inhibitory neurotransmitter.

It weakens glutamine, an excitatory neurotransmitter.

The net result is sluggishness or decreased mental faculty and therefore alcohol is classified as central nervous system (brain) depressant.

Social reasons:

No one publicly acknowledges himself to be more than occasional or social drinker; no parents are happy or proud if their children consume alcohol, regardless of their age. Eight % of US population suffers from alcohol abuse and/or alcohol dependence. This number does not include so-called social drinkers (if one can always control the amount).

As we know the human brain is different from that of animals in that we have the power to think, analyze, and speak; alcohol alters all three. This is the basic cause of alcohol-related social problems including: domestic violence, aggressive behavior, anger, violence, sexual abuse and rape, broken friendships, broken families, ruined careers, and the phenomenon of binge drinking and its associated problems.

Is your booze vegan?

It might seem strange to consider, but your favorite drink might have more than just alcohol in it.

Brew-masters, winemakers, and distillers may include animal ingredients in their products directly, or they might use them in the processing and filtration.

When making the product, dairy, honey, and other things (including, in one case, a whole chicken dropped in the tank) are ingredients in the final recipe.

When filtering the drinks prior to bottling, companies can use things like isinglass (from fish bladders,) gelatin, egg whites, and seashells, among other things. These products grab onto the impurities and make it easier to catch them in the filters, though there are many animal-free alternatives in use.

These ingredients don't usually show up on the label, so the only way to find out is to ask.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

MEDICINE & VITAMINS

Not all medicines and vitamins are vegan or vegetarian. For thousands of years, Jains were using naturopathy or Ayurvedic medicines to treat and cure many illness and diseases. Not anymore. With the advent of technology, modern medical and health delivery systems (particularly the allopathic system) uses thousands of medicines, procedures, surgical treatments, vitamins, and supplements. A large number of the modern allopathic system of medicines are derived, directly or indirectly, from animals or animal based products. In many cases, not only are two-four sensed life forms killed or tortured (for example, in flu shots that come from hens and eggs) but five-sensed animals are as well. In addition, many of the medicines and procedures are first developed by using animals for testing.

Recently I read that several Ayurvedic medicines too are not free from animal ingredients either.

For the practitioners of Jain, Ahimsak, and vegan way of life, it is necessary that one should be vigilant and should strive to find alternatives such as cruelty free medicines, supplements, and treatments. There are quite a few such systems available in the marketplace today. Some of these are given names like alternate systems, holistic healing systems, homeopathic systems, yoga, pranayams (controlled breathing), acupressure, acupuncture, or Tai-Chi, for some examples.

THE USE OF ANIMAL – BASED PRODUCTS OTHER THAN FOOD

In this chapter I will examine the use of animal and insect-based items that are used every day for the covering and beautification of the body and for home and automobiles furnishings.

Please note: here, I am not at all implying with the practices and incidents described in the following stories in this chapter are peculiar to the Jain community only; neither I am assigning blame. In fact many non-Jains also practice the same very frequently. Since ahimsa is the external manifestation of confidence, inner purity and wholeness and Jains are the keepers of ahimsa, it is their paramount duty to think, contemplate, and then decide their prevalent habits, customs, traditions, and practices with the light of ahimsa.

Jains have used cotton and its derivatives for all types of clothing for a long time but in the last several decades the use of silk, wool, feather, down, leather, fur, and human-made fibers (nylon, synthetics) are also becoming normal in the Jain households.

THE USE OF ANIMAL BASED PRODUCTS

Some Jains probably do not stop and consider that some of the products they use or wear on their bodies (including, for

example, leather, silk, wool, pearls, and coral), use as medicines (vitamins, over the counter and prescribed medicines at home and in hospitals), furnishings in homes and cars (leather, ivory, silk, wool, animal skins, stuffed animal heads), beauty aids (many kinds of cosmetics), entertainment (the use of animals on roadside shows and circuses such as monkeys, bears, elephants, tigers, lions), for transportation and joy rides—all of these have a common component of some kind of (severe or slightly less severe) cruelty to helpless creatures, most of whom are five-sensed.

Still, there are many people within and outside the Jain community who understand the nature of cruelty and suffering to animals and try very diligently to avoid the use of such products. Let me share a few interesting trends and developments in North America. Hopefully, the following examples offer some guidance.

There are nearly 20 million (more than 3 times the population of Jains in the world) vegetarians and vegans in North America and that number is growing every day.

Proper labeling and the use of cruelty free products are increasing at a very impressive rate and this information is now readily available on the internet and in print media.

“Vegan” and “veganism” have become commonly acceptable words and also part of the English dictionary.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of magazines, books, podcasts, blogs, radio, websites, Facebook pages, vegan groups, societies and television talk shows devoted to vegan and vegetarianism.

Quite a few celebrities are now identified vegans.

About twenty five years ago, there was a peaceful march in Washington D.C. for Animal Rights and 25,000 people from all over the United States participated; local marches and activism continue in nearly every corner of the US.

There are thousands of stores (online and traditional) catering to animal free products.

There are annual awards and honors to recognize people, books, media, and movies that observe and promote animal welfare and veganism.

Let me share a few actual happenings that I observed or heard myself:

- In the 1980s and 1990s I lived in Cincinnati, Ohio. We had established the Jain Center of Cincinnati-Dayton there where we used to observe all our major Jain functions and festivals. Once, I invited Jayne Meinhart, a native of Cincinnati, a committed vegan and a TV and Radio talk show personality, to the Mahavir Jayanti Celebrations at the Jain Center. Jayne, like all of us, removed her shoes outside the assembly hall. During her speech, she commented that she knows that Jains are the biggest followers of ahimsa yet when she came in, she noticed that not a single pair of shoes or sandals was non-leather whereas she (Jayne) herself had stopped use of leather many years ago. You can imagine how embarrassing or inspirational that was for us Jains.
- In 1995, at the JAINA convention held at the Chicago Jain temple, Mrs. Menaka Gandhi (a Cabinet Minister in India) was the chief guest. In her keynote speech, Mrs. Gandhi chided the Jain audience about the use of many kinds of animal based products (leather, silk, pearls) in their daily use while she herself —a non-Jain —does not use any. Mrs. Gandhi is a champion of animal rights and has given her very best to the cause of animal protection and their welfare in India. In the Indian parliament, as an M. P, as a Central cabinet Minister, and as a commoner, she has championed this cause even at the risk of her own life. I have come to know that the transportation of live animals in India across state lines is illegal, yet with the connivance of corrupt government officers, thousands (if not millions) of animals are daily transported in goods trains to far off places to

slaughter houses. Whenever Mrs. Gandhi comes to know of such trains carrying animals, she goes and tries to stop the trains (even in the middle of night and at the risk of her own personal safety). She does this quite often.

Now you decide: is this behavior—using animal products for fashion —consistent with ahimsa?

You may ask, “Why should I not use leather and leather products for body coverings, accessories and furnishings?”

Real leather is a skin of the animals and they (animals) are the only source for real/genuine leather. Humans are the only species that use the skin of another animal. No animal uses other animals’ skin. In the distant past, leather was used for footwear (shoes) and in several industrial applications. Today, there are hundreds (perhaps thousands) of products (for human as well as for industrial use) and only in the last five to seven decades, the use and production of leather has increased manifold.

Today, humans use leather for all kinds of footwear, wallets, purses, trouser belts, camera and computer cases, brief cases, suit-cases, shoes, jackets and coats, head gear and head coverings, furnishings (seats in vehicles and in home furnishings), home decorations (including paintings and many other items).

In the past, Jains always avoided the use and the trading of leather and leather related products in any shape or form. If Jains did use leather, it was only for footwear provided that leather was derived from the carcasses of naturally dead animals and not from humanly killed animals.

HOW IS REAL LEATHER PRODUCED THESE DAYS?

These days, a majority of leather is produced by killing animals (in slaughter houses) and very little comes from the carcasses of animals who died natural deaths.

A large number of animals are killed daily for meat thus providing leather, bones, urine, and blood as byproducts. Also, significant numbers are killed specifically for special leather (such as in home and car furnishings, hand purses and leather jackets). In that case, meat, bones, urine and blood are the byproducts (not primary products).

Special leather has certain characteristics like being free from surface scratches and blemishes on the outside skin plus other features such as softness, strength and durability, and texture. Special leather finds its use in home furnishings (sofas, chairs), in automobile seats (generally in expensive/luxury cars), body and footwear such as jackets, expensive shoes, hand purses and also in industrial uses. In addition, in India, some special and fresh leather is used for making silver varak (silver foils). Silver foil in India is most commonly used on sweets and other edible products and also in some Jain temples for decorating the idols and pratimas.

For special leathers, certain types of animals (mostly cows and calves) are specially reared and raised under very controlled conditions (for example, cows are confined to stay in certain positions so that they do not scratch their skins and thus cause scratches and blemishes on the leather skin). Once ready, these animals are slaughtered (primarily) for leather and the meat and other body parts become the secondary byproducts.

THE ECONOMICS OF LEATHER & HOW ITS USE DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTES TO SLAUGHTER OF MORE ANIMALS

Let me again share a few examples to illustrate the varied ways leather contributes to violence against animals.

A few years ago I was in New Delhi, India. There, one of my very distant Jain relatives brought his son (in his early twenties) to meet with me. This young man came and touched my feet (as a sign of respect in Indian customs). I noticed that this boy was wearing a leather jacket. Immediately, I told this

young man to remove his leather jacket, hang it outside the house and then come and sit next to me, which he did very politely. Then, I told the boy that there is so much himsa in the production and use of this leather jacket and he should not wear it, as he is directly and indirectly responsible for the killing of an animal. At this, the boy asked “Uncle, how can I be responsible for the killing? The animal was killed for meat [and not for leather] and I am just using leather which was a by-product any way.” Now, it was time for me to give him a lesson in simple economics.

I started with a simple example. I said, “Let us suppose the cow is worth \$1,000 and yields 500 kg of meat after slaughtering. Thus, the production cost of meat is \$2 per kg. Now if the same cow gives byproducts of, say \$400 worth of leather and \$100 for bones, urine, and blood, then the net cost for 500kg of meat is only \$500 or \$1 per kg.

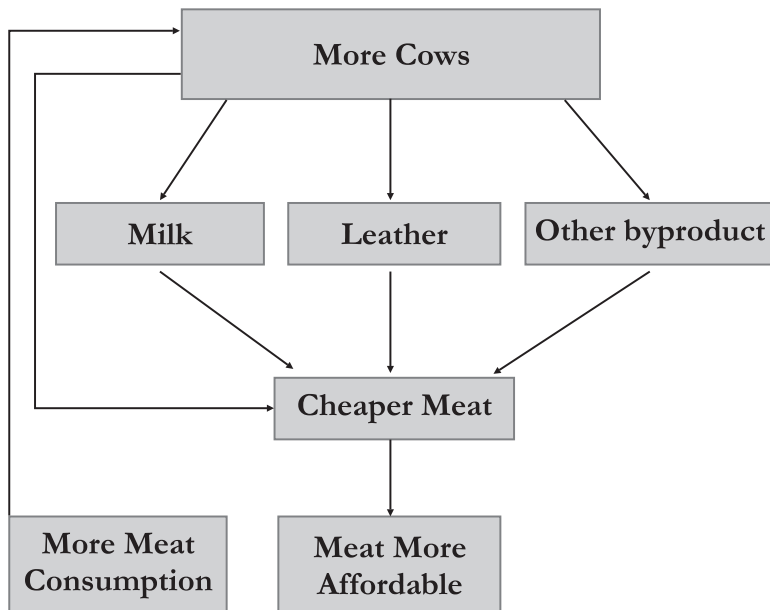
Now the meat becomes that much cheaper and more people will be able to afford meat at \$1/kg as opposed to \$2 per kg; hence raising and slaughtering a greater number of animals. Since leather significantly subsidizes the price of meat, the killing of more and more animals goes on and the dairy farming industry thrives.”

With this simple example, this young Jain boy understood very clearly his direct role in the killing of animals. Since that time, to the best of my knowledge, he has never worn a leather jacket again. He also became one of my best friends.

Once I was staying at a very holy Jain pilgrim place in India. One morning I woke up early (at five o'clock in the morning) and went to the temple to do the darshan and some meditation in front of the Jain pratimas. When I got there, I saw a group of Jains already doing their arti.

I noticed that one of the persons in the group was wearing a leather jacket while doing Arti. At the entrance to the temple gate, it was clearly written that nothing containing leather (camera cases, belts, purses, wallets, and jackets) is allowed

ECONOMICS OF MILK & LEATHER USE MORE USE OF DAIRY PRODUCTS



**Use of Dairy Products & leather subsidize
the price of Meat**

within the Jain temple premises. Noticing this, I immediately went to the gate keeper/security guard and asked “How come this person is doing arti with a leather jacket on?”

The security guard replied, “Sir, we try to stop many people like this but they argue and push us aside. What can we do?”

You can imagine how I felt at that moment. What happened to Ahimsa in the Jain community?

HOW MANY ANIMALS ARE KILLED FOR JUST ONE LEATHER JACKET OR SET OF SOFA OR CAR SEATS?

I have mentioned before that animals are specially reared, raised, and killed just for specialty leather that is used in sofas, home and auto furnishings, leather jackets and purses. A number of cows needed for the production of just one set of ordinary sized sofa seats will vary, but it is definitely more than one cow and in some cases may be two to three cows. Similarly, in the case of leather seats for cars, the number of cows sacrificed to adorn the auto seats for a car will be at least one to two cows.

My Jain brothers and sisters, I ask: Do we ever stop and think what we are doing? Are we only concerned with himsa to one-sensed beings but completely indifferent to the killing of five-sensed beings?

Are leather furnishings that much better and comfortable that several cows have to be killed for our perceived beauty and pride of possession?

We may choose to believe it or not, but by using leather and leather products in any shape or form, we are directly —not just indirectly —responsible for the killing of many innocent and helpless five sensed creatures.

There are hundreds of alternative materials to leather that are cheaper, beautiful, and comfortable.

Leather is the skin of a live animal, which is also laced with hairs, blood, and meat. In some cases, some of these (hair, meat and blood particles) cannot be fully removed before a product is made.

Have you ever smelled a leather product? It smells awful and the smell lingers on for a long time; in fact it never completely vanishes.

The design and aesthetic choices are very limited in leather products.

Everything in non-leather is available these days, easily, cheaply and just as durable. One can choose from thousands of selections on hundreds of web sites offering non-leather products. For non-leather automobile seats, for nearly all makes and models, one can order in advance from the factory. I can assure you that the experience will be worth the wait. Just try it.

About a dozen years ago I had gone to Australia and there I went to meet with a Jain scholar (he was a New Zealander) at the National University of Australia in Canberra. After he showed me his department and the university library (with a large collection of Jain books), I invited this scholar to accompany me to a dinner at another Jain's (from India) house in that town to which my wife and I had been invited to earlier. My scholar friend agreed. When we arrived at my host's house, we noticed that his house was recently furnished with a brand new leather sofa set. This was the only sofa to sit on as there were no other chairs or seats. As a courtesy to my host, I sat on that leather sofa but my New Zealander friend refused to sit on the sofa and instead he sat on the floor. After an hour so, when the turn came to have dinner, my scholar friend refused to eat there, left the house (without eating) and returned to his university campus. I really felt ashamed and small. Here was a lesson for me in ahimsa in practice.

I have met several of our Jain youth in America who will not buy cars with leather seats. I know of quite a few cases where some of my own young relatives wanted to buy expensive cars (luxury cars such as Lexus, BMW and Mercedes) where the standard seats are of genuine leather. In some cases, some models are not at all offered in non-leather seats. These mindfull Jain youths opted either for a cheaper model or, when feasible, placed a special order at a premium with the dealer for a non-leather seat directly from the factory. Under no circumstances would they choose a leather car seat, no matter what.

ALTERNATIVES TO LEATHER

Instead of buying leather clothing, fashion accessories or footwear, look for goods made with microfiber, pleather, synthetic, imitation or artificial leather, or all human-made materials. Artisans are now using “vegan leather” [artificial, plant-based non-leather] in purses and jackets in a wide and gorgeous array. Alternately, you can opt for products made of cotton, linen, rubber, ramie, canvas, and chlorenol.

If you buy and use leather products, please do see this short film:

<http://www.jainsamaj.org/magazines/ahimsatimesshow.php?id=368>

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE USE OF SILK: SHOULD I USE REAL SILK AND SILK PRODUCTS?

Before I delve deeper into this topic, let me define a few commonly used terms.

- **Silk Factory:** It is a slaughterhouse of three-sensed insects. The generally understood slaughterhouse that we all understand is for five-sensed non-human beings, but a silk factory by all definition is also a slaughterhouse. In fact, a silk factory is a much bigger slaughterhouse because here practically infinite numbers of three-sensed insects are slaughtered to satisfy some human's wants, not needs.
- **Dealers in real silk:** These are the dealers of products from slaughterhouses (silk factory).
- **Users of real silk in all reality** are nothing but users of the meat coming out of theses slaughterhouses.

The above is a reality. No sugar coating or different terminologies can change or hide the reality.

Unfortunately a significant number of Jains (of all ages and both genders) engage in the above in some combination.

Jains use and trade in real silk and silk products extensively. There are thousands of silk saree shops in India owned by Jains. Not only silk is used by ladies (sarees and related body wear), by men (kurtas, jackets, coats, scarves, neck ties), in home furnishings (for curtains, draperies, carpets and rugs), but also in temples for poojas as some people consider it purer than cotton dhotis and sarees.

The complete process of silk making is purely of himsa. Silk is nothing but practically the skin of millions of two- to three-sensed silk worms (these are specially reared in factories and farms), which are boiled alive in hot water to extract silk thread.

My brothers and sisters, I am not kidding. I personally have toured several silk factories and seen the rearing of silk worms and also witnessed all this killing with my own eyes.

There are a significant number of Jains who either don't believe or don't want to believe that silk comes from the dead bodies of silk worms. This is similar to many meat eaters who don't connect that meat comes by killing live animals. In the case of silk, one should take a tour of a silk factory. I have done that. This will be an eye opener. One can search at any of the websites such as Google to know where silk comes from. Below is information from one such search from a web site:

Silk is the material produced by the silk worm to make its cocoon. While there are several types of silkworm, it's the mulberry silk worm that is used to make commercial silk. They're called mulberry silk worms because they feed off mulberry leaves. The mulberry silkworms yield the most quantity of silk. Shortly before the silkworm is going to eat its way through the silk of the cocoon, the worm is killed so the cocoon can be un-raveled into a single thread. Silkworms produce silk when they grow from worms, into their adult stage: a moth. In between these stages, the silkworm spins a single thread of silk around

itself, which eventually hardens into a cocoon to protect it during this transformation. This silk is excreted from the salivary glands. The worm is boiled alive during this stage (I personally saw this being done) before the silk is removed. If it were allowed to grow and emerge from the cocoon, it would break the cocoon in the process, making it less valuable for silk production (and useless for high quality garment).

ALTERNATIVES: Many common fibers simulate the look and feel of silk, including nylon, polyester, Tencel, milkweed, seedpod, fiber, silk cotton and celiba tree filament, and rayon.

CAN THE USE & TRADE OF REAL SILK IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM BE JUSTIFIED BY THE JAIN COMMUNITY?

The big and short answer is affirmatively, “NO.” How can a community that talks of ahimsa all the times and on that basis distinguishes itself from all others, justify and condone the use and trading of silk and its products. Silk worms are not one-sensed creatures. They are 2-3 sensed. For just one yard of silk (used in sarees and other items) one is responsible for taking away the live of at least 50,000 -100,000 living insects. Jains avoid the torture and killing of 1-5 sensed creatures but shut their eyes when it comes to the use and trading in silk which, like leather, is purely a product of himsa.

How can silk be purer than cotton? Pure silk cannot be made without killing the silkworms. How can then a product that represents the killing and murder of thousands of silkworms be used in poojas in the temples? In my opinion, this is not right.

My Jain brothers and sisters, I urge you to consider not to trade in and use a product (silk), which is based on pure himsa and nothing but himsa. There are many other businesses and clothing materials that Jain community should consider for trade and use.

Use of silk sarees, kurtas, jacket, ties, and dhotees should be avoided. Cotton and other man made materials are much better for that purpose.

The following accounts demonstrate examples of personal choice in promoting ahimsa.

◇ Personally, I have taken a vow not to use silk in any shape or form. I avoid all suiting, shirts, neck ties, scarves, draperies or any such products that even have a small quantity of silk in them. Please try it. It is such a great feeling. In the same fashion, I will not buy, trade in, accept or present any item to any one that contains silk.

◇ About twenty four years ago, I went to attend a Diksha ceremony of a Jain sadhvi (nun) in India. After the ceremony, I had a chance to speak for a few minutes to a very good size gathering of men and women. Here I mentioned, “The girl who just became a sadhvi has renounced everything. We all have come to attend this solemn ceremony. What are we going to renounce?”

I reminded my audience about silk and the inherent himsa in its production. Immediately quite a good number of people (both male and female) stood up and took a vow not to trade in, buy, or wear silk any more. I was so pleased. I feel, one simple but important awareness about ahimsa in our clothing will lead to many other such awareness in other items of our daily use or business.

◇ In November 2009, I was in India and visited a small town in Western UP. I came to know that in the Jain sthanak there next day, the group of Jain sadhus will end their 4 months Chaturmas and the community has organized a big function to thank and bid the sadhus farewell. I too attended this function.

At the end, I was requested to address the gathering. Here again, I asked the audience that after the pravachans and tapasyas during 4 months and paryushan, what offerings the

audience is going to give to the departing sadhus? I suggested that men and women should take a vow of not to use silk and wool (wool will be discussed later here) for a year. My hope here was that if someone is willing to give up the use of silk and wool for a year, most probably it will be permanent and he and she will think twice before going back again to its use. Here again quite a large number of men and women took this vow.

I hope you too can do this but first it must start with you with a thought that you too might not manufacture, trade, buy, use, accept or present silk and its product in any shape and form.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

WOOL FOR BODY COVERING: IS WOOL TOO A PRODUCT OF HIMSA?

The answer is yes. All wool is nothing but the hair of mostly domesticated (vegetarian) animals. Most of the wool that we use comes from sheep and goat. These animals are specially raised (like dairy farming) mainly for the purpose of wool and secondarily for meat. The major centers of wool production are New Zealand (with 60 million sheep; 20 times more than the human population of New Zealand), Kashmir, Australia, and several other places.

In the books, many of us read when we were younger, sheep live happy lives, roaming free until they are carefully sheared and dying peacefully after a long, idyllic life. For most merino and other sheep in Australia and other places, such portraits are simply fairy tales.

Every year, millions of gentle lambs endure painful mutilations in which tender skin is cut from their backsides. And when their usefulness as wool producers ends, thousands of terrified sheep are crammed onto multi-story ships to be transported for days and even weeks to countries where they will be violently slaughtered far from the paddocks where they were raised. Their painful deaths are little more than statistics

for an Australian wool industry where this misery has become standard practice.

Australia is the largest producer of wool in the world, with most of it coming from merino sheep. These sensitive animals are specifically bred to have extra-wrinkly skin, which produces more wool for the industry to push onto global markets. Those wrinkles collect moisture and lead to a hideous condition called “flystrike,” in which blowflies lay eggs in the folds of the sheep’s skin and resulting maggots eat their flesh, sometimes all the way to the bone.

Rather than making sensible and humane efforts to prevent the condition, Australian farmers perform a dreadful procedure called “mulesing,” in which chunks of flesh from around lambs’ tails are cut using instruments resembling gardening shears. The mutilated lambs stumble away in pain with raw, bloody wounds.

This cruel practice is just the beginning of a lifetime of escalating pain and fear inflicted on these naturally gentle and playful animals. Once their wool production declines, many sheep are exported to the Middle East or North Africa on sweltering, multi-story ships crammed full of terrified animals who are forced to live amidst their own filth for weeks. Many die en route: some are trampled to death, and others perish slowly from illness.

When sheep or goat is ready to be sheared, this is done by automated machines these days. The sheep is tranquilized and held tightly in the shearing machine (so that it cannot move). The animal is frightened and the automatic machine does the shearing. Since the outside body of the sheep is not smooth (it is curvy and with some bones protruding) the machine severely injures the skin with major cuts, bruises and bleeding. The helpless creature suffers lots of pain and injury. Some wounds become septic and about 10 % or so sheep are so severely injured that they are killed right way. Every year this cycle goes on. When a sheep cannot produce economical quantity of

wool (just like the cow which can no longer produce milk), it goes to slaughtering right way. The shearing of sheep for their wool involves an unspeakable amount of violence

Jains use and trade extensively in woolen clothing and wool items. Quite a few big mill owners of wool products (especially in Ludhiana, Punjab) are Jains. Even some Jain sadhus use woolen cloths. Use of woolen shawls (for men and women) during winter and as gift and for honoring someone is quite prevalent within the Jain community.

Some Jains defend this because it has been traditional to use wool. Prof. Gary Francione, a Jain himself, questions and says that tradition can no more suffice here than it can in any other area of human conduct. If Jainism stands for anything, it represents the notion that ethics is a matter of rational thought and careful consideration. It is precisely when we have been lulled into complacency by tradition that we must be most conscientious. HH the Dalai Lama says “traditions are never cast in concrete and hence in light of the new knowledge, facts, time and environment, traditions must be changed.”

There are some who say that we cannot live a perfect life so it is acceptable for us to eat dairy or to use other animal products as a “compromise.” Jainism certainly recognizes that we cannot avoid all violence in our lives, which is precisely why laypersons are not required to eschew violence to immobile, one-sense organisms. In the words of Prof. Francione, “but if our inability to avoid all Himsa means that we can eat dairy or use silk and wool, which involves inflicting injury and death on three to five-sensed beings, then it must mean that we can eat flesh as well.”

Francione mentions here that another principle that applies here is of the need vs. want and of minimum and necessary/unavoidable himsa. Jains are supposed to weigh each need whether it is a need or a want and even if it is a need, how and in what way, I can minimize himsa. Certainly, since many other alternatives are available which are just as good or may

be even better, one can avoid the use of milk, wool, leather and silk in daily use.

There are some who argue that because dairy products, wool, and other animal products do not necessarily involve suffering (these products can, it is claimed, be produced “humanely; the animal is not killed”); these products are different from flesh. But under the very best of circumstances, there is suffering involved in the production of these products, and the death of animals is a necessary aspect of any industry or practice that uses animals.

We have an obligation to take care of the domesticated animals we have brought into existence. But we should not continue to bring more into existence or to create a demand for animal products. To do so cannot be reconciled with the principle of Ahimsa.

Please allow me to share some sad details about what was witnessed and documented on a sheep farm in the town of Smeaton in Victoria, Australia:

“Bodies of dead and dying sheep littered the farm’s fields, some being eaten alive by maggots. One ram was found sitting alone in an apparent state of shock. He was away from his flock, too weak to move, and trembling. The ram had been “mulesed,” left with a broad chunk of flesh cut from his backside in a crude and painful attempt to stop flies from laying their eggs in the moist folds of his wrinkled skin.”

My brothers and sisters, so far I have described how sheep are treated and wool is produced in Australia and other countries but I must submit that conditions and cruelty to sheep in India is no less; in fact it is lot worse than the countries I have described above. You will be shocked to see the torture if you ever decide to take a tour and see the whole situation with your own eyes. I guarantee, just do it once and you will never use silk and wool again.

ALTERNATIVES: Instead of shopping for heavy, itchy wool socks and mittens or expensive angoras or cashmere sweaters, choose garments made with more light –weight and colorful

materials, like nylon, acrylic, orlon, polyester, fleece, cotton, flannel, synthetic, shearling, Tencel, Gore-Tex, Thermolite, Thinsulate, and Polartec Wind Pro.

As with silk and leather, in the last Eighteen years, I stopped buying or accepting any more clothing or items made of wool. However, I must admit that I do have a stock of such items that will last me my lifetime. So far, I have not decided to solve this dilemma, options would be to wear, not wear, donate, or throw them in garbage. In various meetings and gatherings in India, I did talk about wool the same way I do about the use of silk and leather. Luckily, I have been able to convince a few and don't know how long that passion will last with them. I hope forever.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

BODY DECORATIONS & HIMSA: THE USE & TRADE IN ANIMAL-BASED PRODUCTS SUCH AS CORAL, PEARLS, & IVORY

Many Jains use and also trade in jewelry items such as pearls. In fact, in my estimate, Jains participate in this trade and they own thousands of diamond and pearl distribution and wholesale selling centers in India, Belgium, the US, Canada and the UK. Similarly, Jain ladies love these items as jewelry. I personally know a few Jains in India who have large showrooms dealing in ivory products, too. It is a known fact that both of these items involve not only significant cruelty to the animals (oysters in case of pearls and elephants in case of ivory) but also actual death by torture.

Coral: Coral reefs sustain colonies of millions of tiny animals called coral polyps. They grow at an extremely slow rate of 1 to 2 centimeters a year. Mining destroys the work of centuries in a matter of hours and kills a multitude of sea creatures. Coral is used as jewelry and in some ayurvedic medicines.

Pearls: It could take as many as 100,000 oysters to produce a single pearl necklace. Pearls are produced by making an

incision into the oyster's soft body, and putting some gravel inside (this gravel is a bit of shell/tissue from another freshly sacrificed life). Imagine the pain of a splinter in your finger and then multiply that many times over to understand the pearl oyster's continuous agony. An oyster is liable to die while being incised, and stands only a ten percent chance of surviving the seven years until the one single pearl is formed. Only forty percent of the pearls obtained are marketable and only five percent are, as desired by consumers, perfectly spherical. Each and every pearl represents hundreds of thousands of shells being opened up and discarded after killing those oysters.

Apart from jewelry, mother of pearl, another living shell-based decoration, is often used on decorative items. For example, Lacoste polo shirts frequently use buttons made of mother of pearl.

Enamel/Meenakari: This process involves firing a special decorative paint that contains varnish or resin. The paint, varnish, or resin could contain animal substances.

Lac/Shellac: Used for bangles and handicrafts, these also have footprints of himsa.

Shells: Used as temple conches, buttons, jewelry and assorted trinkets. Each shell is the home of a living marine creature known as a mollusk. The shells are dredged from the ocean bed and boiled alive to kill the animals inside before drying and selling commercially. Instead, one can buy Bishnupura Terracotta conch shells available, for example, at the Central Cottage Industries Emporium, that blow and sound like real conch shells.

Scrimshaw: this is the art of intricately carving and decorating whalebone/tooth, ivory, or shell.

I have seen the use of pearls in Jain temples on Jain idols. Similarly, during Paryshana on Bhagwan Mahavir Janam Vaachan day and swapna ceremonies, and during ghee boli for fund raising, and to develop the tempo for higher ghee bolis,

Jain ladies normally sing “*Aaj mahaare deraasar main, motee yee naa varshaa re,*” (which means, “Let there be a shower of pearls today in our Jain temples”). I question since Moti (pearl) is a product of pure himsa to a three-sensed creature, how can we condone the use of pearls to decorate the Jain pratimas and also to sing songs which praise himsa or product of himsa?

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE USE OF BEAUTY AID PRODUCTS

There are very few products that are cruelty free. In fact, many of the ingredients come from animals and all products are first tested on animals for their safety on humans. During this testing, test animals are subjected to torture, become blind, or acquire many terminal diseases. Just consider —is this what we want, to beautify our bodies with the suffering and torture of innocent animals? There are many cruelty free products and alternatives available today. One simply has to look.

Every year, approximately 14 million animals suffer and die in painful tests in an attempt to determine the safety of cosmetics and household products. Nearly every major brand of cosmetic and household product, such as toothpaste, lipstick, dishwashing liquid, and furniture polish, are tested on animals such as rabbits and dogs. Additionally, every time a company changes its ingredients or advertises a “new” or “improved” product, the substance is then retested.

Two of the most common methods of testing are the Draize Eye Irritancy Test and the Lethal Dose 50 (or LD50) test. The Draize test is used to test substances that might get into the human eye. During this test, a certain amount of a concentrated solution is placed into the eyes of conscious albino rabbits. Their eyes are held open with clips, and many rabbits break their necks or backs as they struggle to escape. The damage to the rabbits’ eyes is then recorded at intervals over a period of time. Reactions to the irritants include swelling of the eyelid, inflammation of the iris, ulceration, bleeding, and blindness.

The animals usually receive no anesthesia or pain relieving drugs during the tests.

The LD50 test measures the amount of a toxic substance that will, in a single dose, kill half of the animals in a test group. Again, no painkillers are administered. During this test, the experimental substance is forced into the animals' throats or pumped into their stomachs by tube, sometimes causing death by stomach rupture or from the sheer bulk of the chemical dosage. Substances are also injected under the skin, into a vein, or into the lining of the abdomen. They are also often applied to the eyes, rectum, or vagina, or forcibly delivered for inhalation through a gas mask.

Many health professionals agree that both the Draize test and the LD50 test are crude and imprecise. Ophthalmologist Stephen Kaufman of New York University Medical Center argues that the rabbit eye is so different from the human eye that ophthalmologists have no use for Draize data. Similarly, Dallas Pratt, MD argues that LD50 test results can be affected by the age and sex of the animal, their housing and nutrition, temperature, time of day and year, and the exact method used.

Additionally, cosmetic and product tests on animals are not required by law. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only requires that the ingredients be "adequately substantiated for safety" prior to marketing, or the product must carry a warning label saying that its safety has not been determined. The FDA does not require any particular sort of tests. Testing methods are determined by the cosmetic and household product manufacturers, and the test data are used only defend the companies against consumer lawsuits.

There are many non-animal testing methods available that have proven to be more reliable and less expensive than animal tests. Alternatives include use of cell cultures, corneal and skin tissue cultures, corneas from eye banks, and computer and mathematical models. Companies can also make products using the many ingredients and combinations of ingredients

that have already been determined to be safe by the Cosmetics, Toiletry and Fragrance Association.

As caring and compassionate individuals, regardless of our religious backgrounds, why would we use any products whose creation has caused so much pain and suffering, when there are so many alternatives available? There are many products available in common department stores and supermarkets that are clearly labeled as “not tested on animals” and “contains no animal ingredients.” Remember, every time you purchase or use a product that is cruelty free, you are doing your part in preventing the needless suffering of countless animals.

For a listing of many cruelty based and cruelty free products, go and search on Google.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

RELATED NEWS & EXAMPLES OF CRUELTY-FREE MOVEMENTS

Good News! India Bans import of Cosmetics Tested on Animals, November 14, 2014

A huge victory for animals—the Indian government has just announced a ban on the import of animal-tested cosmetics!



This news comes after intensive efforts by PETA India, Union Minister Maneka Gandhi and others and will save millions of animals from being blinded, poisoned

and killed in cruel and useless tests for products sold to India's billion-plus population. The India Ministry of Health and Family Welfare made its decision public in The Gazette of India today and will implement the ban in November.

The compassionate move brings India up to speed with the European Union and Israel, which have already banned the sale and marketing of animal-tested cosmetics. Earlier this year, **animal testing for cosmetics was banned in India**. Now, companies that want to sell cosmetics in the country won't be able to conduct cruel tests elsewhere, either.

Just last month, it looked like the existing ban on animal testing for cosmetics could be under threat from a group of international companies – including NIVEA, Johnson & Johnson and L'Oréal – which are members of the Indian Beauty & Hygiene Association. Thank you to everyone who wrote to these companies to help make sure that didn't happen.

Congratulations to PETA India and everyone else who was involved in achieving this immense victory for animals. It's a message to the whole world that India will not tolerate blinding bunnies for shampoo, mascara and other such products – and this ruling now gives an upper hand to businesses that use superior, human-relevant, non-animal testing methods.

“Canvas Shoes in Indian Schools,” by Liz Miller

“Recently, India's Central Board of School Education and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) approved a proposal by Mrs. Maneka Gandhi to replace leather shoes with cruelty-free canvas alternatives as the required footwear in Indian schools. The proposal states that black leather shoes were introduced as part of a required school uniform during Britain's colonial rule of India, and that by replacing them with canvas shoes, the country can choose its own, more eco-friendly option. Representatives of CISCE say that the move will benefit schoolchildren and their families, as leather shoes require routine cleaning, polishing, and maintenance while canvas shoes are more comfortable and durable”.

“Thanks to Maneka Gandhi,” by Ravi Pandya

“Thanks be to Maneka Gandhi for this humane and compassionate act and setting an example at home and abroad. We were privileged when Maneka-jī came to Bristol, UK on Mahatma Gandhi-jī’s birthday anniversary and celebrate his legacy of Ahimsa day, Non-violence and non-aggression day were combined with World Farm Day and St. Francis of Assisi day on 2nd of October.

Indeed, Maneka-jī’s father was in British Military and she was well liked by late House of Commons Speaker, Lord Weatherhill a vegetarian. Hence, it would be a good idea if Maneka-jī can establish links with new administration in UK and help them to follow Indians green and humane example in schools with shoes and satchels which are not made of dead flesh of blessed animals and so UK government can establish loud and clear its green and humane credentials to save the world.”

“The World Peace Diet,” by Dr. Will Tuttle, a Vegan, Animal Rights Activist, Author, & Forceful Speaker

“One of the most important principles that we are called to understand by our inherent yearning for meaning and wisdom is that whatever we sow, we will eventually reap. As I emphasize in *The World Peace Diet*, our routine abuse of animals for food inevitably boomerangs; we end up experiencing what we inflict on them. It’s so obvious that it’s amazing more people don’t notice it and talk about it. Lately, we’ve been witnessing the emergence of more and more mandatory vaccinations, for example. The cows, pigs, and other animals confined for food do not have a choice as to which vaccinations and drugs will be forced on them. They are injected with dozens of different drugs, hormones, and antibiotics not for their benefit, but for the benefit of those who dominate and use them. Their sovereignty and purposes are completely stolen from them.

How do we think, as a culture, that we can steal the sovereignty, purposes, and freedom of billions of fully sentient beings

whose suffering is, to them, as significant as ours is to us, and miraculously escape the consequences of this violent behavior? As we enslave others, we become enslaved ourselves. The net is ever tightening, and the mass media lulls us into complacency, while the ruling elite scares us, and make us like infants scream and run to our parents for security and protection.

The system infantilizes us by forcing us, like perennial infants, to drink milk our entire lives, to be taken care of by authoritarian medical and governmental forces, to seek happiness in consuming meaningless and distracting products and entertainment. Like infants, we are fed foods of violence without comprehension, and it never occurs to us to take responsibility for our violence toward others, to question the official stories that are drilled into us and that enslave and numb us and steal our freedom and sensitivity.

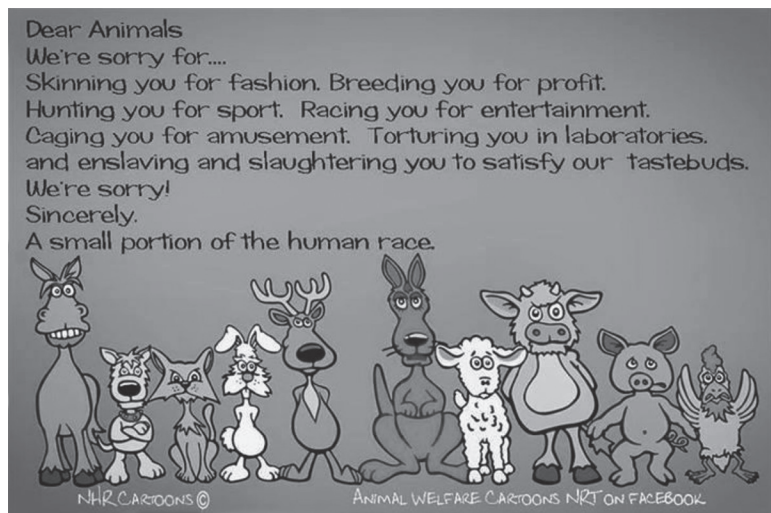
Every human being—like every living being—is a manifestation of the light of eternal consciousness. Each of us has a purpose and we all deserve respect. We experience self-respect and are respected to the degree that we respect others. We celebrate lives of freedom to the degree that we allow others to celebrate their lives freely. Our routine daily violence toward millions of animals for food is enslaving us and destroying our freedom.

The only lasting solution is veganism: More important are our efforts to deepen our understanding and practice of vegan living, of ahimsa (non-violence), which is the essence of veganism, and to advocate vegan living as earnestly and skillfully as we can. There is nothing we can do that's more essential for freedom, peace, sustainability, and for our health and happiness. We are all interconnected. What we do to others, we do to ourselves. We see it everywhere when we awaken from the mass hypnosis of the military-industrial-meat-medical-media complex of materialism and fear. The most effective way to resist the oppression of the established order, and work to transform it, is to embody and spread the vegan message. Without this our efforts are merely ironic—

we want for ourselves what we refuse to give to others. Our culture will be a vegan culture of celebrating respect for all life, or an alternative that is painful to contemplate.”

A MESSAGE FOR CONTEMPLATION

My Jain friends, I want you to contemplate the reality that most of the products of our daily use, such as milk and its products, leather, silk, and pearls are all products of slaughterhouses for two-five sensed creatures, they have significant footprints of himsa and must be avoided.



SOME CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY

Every community has its customs and traditions. Many of the customs vary and change from country to country, within the same country, over time and with the prevailing environment and circumstances. Some customs and traditions develop over a long period of time and have a long life cycle, while some customs come and go. The Jain community is no different. Being part of the larger Indian community, it is but natural that Jains follow quite a few traditions and customs in common with many non-Jains. Still, there are a few traditions which are followed by Jains only.

In this chapter, I will describe some prevalent traditions followed by Jains also which most probably may have the foot prints of himsa. Since nothing is cast in concrete, and nothing is permanent, an Ahimsak person should examine each and every tradition that smells or tastes like himsa. Then, after such examination he should take necessary steps to avoid, amend or curtail such practices.

THE TREATMENT OF DOMESTIC SERVANTS & FACTORY WORKERS

Being members of an affluent class in India, many Jains employ people as servants in their homes (domestic servants) and in

also their factories. Unfortunately there is a big distinction (based on the level of education, caste, economic status) that all men/women are not treated equal as five-sensed human beings. In some respects, they are considered quite inferior, especially the domestic servants. It is not uncommon to see that in some homes, they are subjected to verbal abuse not only in private but also in front of guests. Frankly, in some homes I have personally observed that the higher the affluence, the poorer the treatment to the domestic servants. Here are a few illustrative examples.

- ◇ A few years ago, I, along with a group of American friends (who were in India on a trade mission), were at an affluent Jain's house for dinner. The host had many domestic servants. My American friends noticed and told me that the host was abusing and ridiculing some of the servants at top of his voice in front of his guests. This was as if he wanted to show his power and control. In fact, one of my American friends (a highly placed executive) commented to me that in next life he wishes not be born as a servant in India but instead prefers to be born as a dog or a pet in the USA. What an example!
- ◇ In the International Summer School for Jain Studies 2007 class, one participating professor from University of Hawaii, after listening to the lectures on Jain festivals such as Paryushan, Das Laxan and the tradition of saying "Michchhami Dukhadam" (asking for forgiveness), inquired "Do Jains normally say 'michchhami dukhadam' to their relatives and friends only or do they do the same to their domestic servants and factory workers as well?"

To my surprise, hardly any Jain present raised his/her hand to show that they say the same "michchhami dukhadam" to their servants and factory workers also. This example shows we don't consider all humans equal. In visits to several Jain homes, the professor had seen how badly and sometimes abusively the domestic servants are treated by some Jains.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

COMMITAL OF HIMSA IN THE NAME OF CASTE

I have read in several Jain scriptures (the Uttradhayan Sutra and others) that there is no caste in Jainism. In his sermons and in his actions, Bhagwan Mahavir, revolted against the practice of caste. Many of the famous Jain Acharyas, sadhus, and sadhvis came and still come from non-Jain families and also from so-called low castes in the Hindu community.

If we stop and think, most of our Jain temples and Pratimas were and have been built, carved and sculpted by low caste non-Jains but the pity is that those very people who gave their sweat, blood, skills, art, creativity, and devotion are denied entry to these same Jain temples (which were initially crafted by their hands) on the pretext that they are low caste. Is this not himsa? Do we ever stop how much hurt it causes to those souls whom we treat this way?

More than fifty years ago, I was a student in an Engineering College in India. It was a tradition there (enforced by the college administration) that a group of eight to ten of us fellow students would hire an assistant (some called him servant) to clean our dorm rooms, make the beds, polish our shoes, and do some other errands. Normally these personal assistants came from poor and low caste families. Seven of my class fellows and I shared one such person. This person had been with me for more than three years.

It never occurred to me to ask him about his caste. One day, a close relative of mine and a devout Jain came to visit me. Because it was summer, I asked my assistant to bring some cold water from a water cooler in a jug for my relative. In the meantime, I went outside to a common bathroom. By the time, I returned, my relative had asked this assistant of his caste and now knowing that my assistant was from a low caste, my relative—in spite of being thirsty—refused to take water from him. Needless to say I was heartbroken and so was my assistant. Even today, I have not forgotten that incident. I think himsa to human beings comes in so many shapes and baskets.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

OPEN & UNCONTROLLED HIMSA IN JAIN FUNCTIONS

As affluence within the Jain community increases so does the number, kind, duration, and intensity of rituals. During my visits to India, I have observed not only the celebrations of more rituals but also inventions of new ones every year. These include the number of Panch-kalyanaks, ghee bolis (each panch-kalyanak is not complete without an elaborate ghee boli), number of divas (lamps) for Aarti, the use of live animals (elephants and bullocks), a criminal waste of foods, and the use of animal based products, particularly in clothing of participants and inadequate toilet facilities (resulting in a foul smell and the growth of an infinite number of bacteria, germs, mosquitoes, and flies).

Several groups and individuals in the community have perfected this art of performing such functions as a commercial and lucrative business. I always wonder, is this religion and ahimsa? When will we Jains stop, think, and realize that what we are doing is nothing but more and more himsa?

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE USE OF PEACOCK FEATHER PICHCHHI BY THE DIGAMBRA JAIN MUNIS

This topic has had many debates, is very sensitive, touchy and some people will not take lightly and even abuse me for what I am going to say below. In fact, some friends have warned me and advised me not to touch this topic. Still and to all of them, I say my michchhami dukhadam for causing any hurt.

Digambra Jain munis have no possessions except a kamandlu (made of a particular wood and shaped like a jug, for storing water—not for drinking but only for cleaning after going to the toilet). In addition, a Jain muni will also have a small broom (called a pichchhi) used just for lightly sweeping the

area where the Jain muni is going to sit (to make sure that no insects will be hurt or crushed). The pichchhi is made of peacock feathers. The feathers should be shed naturally by the peacocks, then collected and finally used for making pichchhi. As we can see, this is a product of complete non-violence. As times have changed, several factors have come into play:

- a) The number of Jain munis has grown and hence the need for more pichchhis.
- b) Due to deforestation, urbanization, and hunting, the number of peacocks and hence the availability of naturally shed feathers has gone down significantly.
- c) Because they are used not only for pichchhis but also for many other tourist, commercial and home furnishing items, the production of peacock feathers via peacock factory farming has become a major organized industry.
- d) A new tradition has recently developed within the Jain community. This is to exchange the pichcchi (pichcchi parivartan samroh) annually with very elaborate ceremonies and functions, thus creating the need for more pichchhis every year.
- e) To meet the demand for peacock feathers, just like factory farming for milk, eggs, honey, silk, and wool, peacock feather factory farming has begun.
- f) When we procure pichchhis, how do we and how many of us in all honesty and reality make sure that the peacock feathers are natural shed and without any cruelty to the peacock?

All of this has led to the torture of peacocks where they are captured forcibly and very cruelly stripped of their feathers to the extent that some succumb and the poor birds die. Because of this, pichchhi definitely has footprints of himsa and this cannot be denied. If any one doubts, I urge the Jains to personally go and see how the peacock feathers are procured and pichchhis are made. There is nothing like seeing with one's own eyes.

Should we not take a pause and reflect on what and how much himsa we are perpetuating and inflicting by this tradition? Is this necessary and are there alternatives and other possible materials? I think this tradition needs a serious and very urgent look and I hope it happens soon.

One feedback: As an environmentalist and forest officer during my tenure at Jaipur I was entrusted to check and certify that the peacock feathers for export are naturally shed and not pulled out forcibly which is very common. Peacocks shed feathers not all at one time but they do it one or more at a time during a certain period. As such all feathers if looking alike in appearance, fresh and shining are certainly those pulled out forcibly. There is also some dirty mark at the tip to ascertain that it has been pulled out and not shed naturally and thus those lots were rejected and penalty imposed. I do not see any reason why only peacock feathers alone should be used by Digambar saints whereas Shwetamber saints are using cotton ones. S.M. Jain, 7-B, Talwandi, Commerce College Main Road, Kota-24005, Rajasthan.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

SHOULD I SERVE OR PAY FOR NON-VEG FOOD OR MEALS FOR A CLOSE FRIEND?

This is a very practical issue that I am sure many of us are faced with some times. Most of us have friends (Indians and non-Indians) who are non-veg. Many times we have occasion to go out to eat or go on vacation together. In this scenario, the following situations can arise. Some of these I have faced myself.

- o We all decide to eat together and the waitress brings one bill/invoice. Here we all decide to split equally among all the participants but I realize that my portion of the veg food did not cost as much as the other non-veg friends. If I pay my equal share, I am subsidizing their non-veg food. This bothers me. So, what should I do here?

- o As happens amongst friends, sometimes in the past our non-veg-friends had paid the entire bill but this time it is my turn. Now, should I pay the entire bill or not?
- o We have an out of town guest who is a close friend and we go out to eat. The guest orders non-veg food. Being the host, should I pay for his/her meals?
- o At Thanksgiving time in the US, my company/employer gives each employee a free turkey voucher. I am a vegetarian and the turkey voucher has no value to me. Instead, I have the option to cash the same voucher for some pre-designated dollar amount at the company office. Please note that the cash value of the voucher is much less than the actual price of the turkey in the open market. Now, one of my colleagues at work knows that I am a vegetarian and I do not want the turkey. So, he offers to buy the same voucher from me (at the same cash price or even slightly higher what the company will cash that voucher for). Now, what should I do? By selling the voucher to my colleague, am I still responsible for the life of the turkey?
- o I work for a company, large or small. The company gets visits from many customers and other important company guests. I have meetings with these visitors and after the meeting, I offer (as I am supposed to) to take them out for lunch or dinner on behalf of the company. The guests eat what they want, veg or non-veg (as I cannot dictate what they should eat or not eat). They are the guests of the company and not of mine. Here should I pay or not pay or what should I do knowing full well that the company expects me to be the host and that I will be reimbursed fully for these expenses?
- o Say I am the owner of a company and I take my important visitors to lunch or dinner (or the non-veg food is brought in the company). Being the owner, what should I do?

These are all real life situations. I am sure there are many other similar situations. Here let me share with you how I have tried to handle such situations.

In all such cases, when the money is coming from my own earnings or pocket, no matter how close a friend or a visitor is, I make it very clear in advance to the guest that I will only pay for veg meals and if they eat non veg, then they are on their own. Similarly, I will not equally split the invoice. Here I tell the waiter to bring me my separate bill.

When the employer is paying the bill, then I don't feel it is my job to force my views on the company's customers and visitors regarding what they should eat. Here I pay the entire bill and get reimbursed by the company.

If I happened to be the owner of my own company (this has not been the case with me), here too, I would only serve veg food, no matter what. I will not deviate from my core belief. Please note that in India to the best of my knowledge, for example, Birlas never served any non-veg foods to any; no matter how high up they might be.

In the case of the turkey vouchers, I refused to sell the vouchers to my colleagues. In most of the cases, I destroyed the voucher but in no case did I trade with my colleagues for anything or give them free.

All of us in our lives face this music. My simple principle has been that where himsa is involved, I will not pay or offer goods and services to my guests that I do not consume.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

FAMILY DISPUTES: THE BEGINNING OF LIFE-LONG HIMSA

Having differences in the family on personal and economic matters is part of being human. There is nothing strange about it. After all, each soul and human being is different; different upbringings, environments, and circumstances — and hence reactions and behaviors to the same situations are going to be different. What is important here is how we resolve those issues and conflict: do we resolve using violent

means (fighting, abusing, name calling, hiring goondas, going to court) or do we solve those differences amicably, honestly, truthfully, without malice and using ahimsatmak (non-violent) means. I have noticed that the use of himsak (violent means) is slowly becoming more prevalent than the ahimsatmak (non-violent) approach. Here, Jains are no different than the rest of the folks around. Let me illustrate this with two following examples.

A few years ago, one non-Jain swami-ji was on a train in India from Ghaziabad to Old Delhi station. Seated next to him was a young man (a Hindu) who was in his early thirties. This young man was reading “Ram Charitra Manas,” a holy and pious book about how Lord Rama treated his younger brothers Lakshman and Bharat and how they both in turn treated Lord Rama. Seeing the holy monk, this young man bowed and touched his feet to pay his respects to the swami-ji. Swami-ji noticed that this young man was reading “Ram Charitra Manas,” and asked him “Are you going to Delhi just for fun or for some business?”

The young man replied that he was going to Delhi to the District Courts there because he and his older brother have a legal dispute which had been going on for several years regarding some parental land and property. Hearing this, Swami-ji told the young man that he was reading the wrong book. Instead of “Ram Charitra Manas,” he should be reading “Mahabharata,” the book of great wars and fights.

We see here a big disconnect in talk and walk. The young man had a legal fight going on and had lots of anger and animosity (feelings of himsa) towards his brother, but on the other hand, just to show off, he was reading “Ram Charitra Manas.” The two don’t go together. If he believes in “Ram Charitra Manas,” then he should take steps to resolve issues and conflicts with understanding and fairness. This is the ahimstamak way.

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE

We all are familiar with the story of Mahabhartar in which, because of the quarrels, disputes, animosity, and fighting between two families of close cousins, the biggest, most devastating, and the greatest war took place at Kurukshetra (India) in which more than a million innocent soldiers, elephants, and horses got killed for no fault of their own. That war of destruction, genocide, and himsa on an unprecedented scale could have been avoided if the two warring families would have imagined the scale of the destruction and instead would have settled their dispute between themselves by other means. Below is such a story.

Many Jains know of Bharat and Bahubali (the two sons of Lord Rishabh; the first Tirthankar of the Jains). Bharat (the elder brother) wanted to control all the land and resources and wanted his younger brother Bahubali to be given nothing. He felt Bahubali should accept his supremacy and be under his rule and command. Bahubali refused. Both brothers decided to go to war and settle this dispute. Both the armies are now in full readiness, facing each other and waiting for the signal to start the fighting. At that very moment, both the brothers realized that the fight is between them, the two brothers, and why should others fight and get killed for nothing?

So, the brothers decided to have a wrestling match rather than the fight between their armies. Now, both the brothers are wrestling (to settle their conflict) and lots of people, including both the armies, are watching. At one point Bahubali picks up his older brother with his hands, lifts him up to his shoulders, and is just about ready to throw him on the ground, pin him down and win this fight.

Right at that moment, Bahubali reflects that if he did that, this will be a terrible himsa, the animosity between two brothers will linger on for a long time and also he would be setting a bad historical example in humiliating his older brother. Realizing this, Bahubali brings his brother safely down and releases

him completely and he himself renounces and becomes a mendicant. This is a great story where two brothers have much at stake (part of the empire and land) and still they are thinking of resolving with the spirit of ahimsa.

In our daily lives, even in small conflicts, we resort to himsa. But always there is a better way. Ahimsa and being an ahimsatmak means always bringing “win win” situations and lasting peace in families.

Ahimsa is living proof that spiritual values cannot only be combined with politics but that they also have a successful result in conflict resolution.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WHAT WE DO IN THE TEMPLES AND WHAT WE DO OUTSIDE

Here again, there are some Jain brothers and sisters who separate the two—i.e. what they do in the temples and what they do outside. In my opinion, the biggest temples and poojas are outside the temples.

- o In 2009, President Obama went to Ghana in West Africa. There, near the City of Accra, he was taken to visit a site where, during the African slave trades, the slaves were held in captivity in dungeons prior to the arrival of the ships that will take them to Europe and North and South America. In Ghana and adjoining areas, many slave trade agents would go out and forcibly kidnap men and women, bring them into these warehouses and hold them like cattle waiting for the arrival of the ships.

This all took place on the ground floor of a vast building. On the second floor of the same building there was a church where the slave captors and traders (but not the slaves) would go for their poojas/prayers and religious rituals. After seeing this, President Obama was in tears. He called it “striking” that “right above one of the dungeons where male captives

were kept was a church. And that reminds us that sometimes we can tolerate and stand by a great evil even as we think that we are doing good.” What went on downstairs did not bother the consciences of the same people when they worshipped upstairs. The two are inseparable.

- o Similarly, I want to share another real incident that will explain the same kind of hypocrisy that exists in many cultures including in Indian culture. About twenty two years ago, Dr. Michael Fox, Vice President of the HSUS (Humane Society of United States) and a US Jain organization called Mahavir Vision, Inc. collaborated in making a video about the cruelty to animals in India. The filming crew first went to a Hindu temple in southern India (near Ooty/ Nilgiri Hills) and saw many animals being worshipped there inside the temple.
- o For example, they saw people worshipping the cow and bull in the form of a statue/idol of Nandi, a monkey in the form of a statue/idol of Hanuman, and an elephant in the form of a statue of Ganesha. Next, the camera moves out of the temple and within about a mile or so away from the temple, the crew saw cows and bulls being marched long distances to slaughterhouses, monkeys being made to dance, and elephants being captured and killed for their tusks and ivory. The commentator in this one-hour long video says “To the best of my knowledge, the Hindu religion is the only one that actually worships animals so long as they are made of stone and are in the temples. The same animals are tortured and killed when they are real and outside the temples. What a disconnect between worship and actual practice.”

THE TATA COMPANY GESTURE

A few years ago, I read a news report from an American journalist who said that the biggest and most moralistic temple in India is not any single religious temple but in Jamshedpur where Ratan Tata (the former head of the Tata Empire) has

converted the whole city into a living temple. How he loves and takes care of his employees in that city is a demonstration of devotion more apparent than in any temple.

Ratan Tata was the chairman of Indian Hotels who owns the Taj Mahal Hotel Mumbai, which was the target of terrorists in 2008 (this was India's 26/11). Hotel President, a five star property also belongs to Indian Hotels. The following account is really touching. What Ratan Tata did for the Mumbai victims...I salute and give honor to Shri Ratan Tata.

1. All categories of employees, including those who had completed even one day as casual laborers, were treated as on duty during the time the hotel was closed.
2. Relief and assistance were given to all those who were injured and killed.
3. The relief and assistance was extended to all those who died at the railway station and surroundings including the "Pav- Bhaji" vendors and the pan shop owners.
4. During the time the hotel was closed, the salaries for employees were sent to them by money order.
5. A psychiatric clinic was established in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences to counsel those who needed such help.
6. The thoughts and anxieties going on people's minds were carefully tended and where needed psychological help was provided.
7. Employee outreach centers were opened where all help, food, water, sanitation, first aid, and counseling was provided. 1600 employees were covered by this facility.
8. Every employee was assigned to a mentor and it was that person's responsibility to act as a "single window" clearance for any help that the person required.
9. Ratan Tata personally visited the families of all the eighty employees who in some manner – either through injury or getting killed – were affected.

10. The dependents of the employees were flown from outside Mumbai to Mumbai and taken care of in terms of ensuring mental assurance and peace. They were all accommodated in the Hotel President for three weeks.
11. Ratan Tata himself asked the families and dependents for immediate feedback about what they wanted and needed him to do.
12. In a record time of only twenty days, a new trust was created by the Tatas for the purpose of providing relief for employees.
13. What is unique is that even the other people, the railway employees, the police staff, and the pedestrians—who had nothing to do with the Tatas—were covered by compensation. Each one of them was provided subsistence allowance of Rs. 10K per month for six months.
14. The four-year old granddaughter of a vendor was struck by four bullets and only one was removed in the Government hospital. She was taken to Bombay hospital and several lakh rupees were spent by the Tatas on her to enable her full recovery.
15. New handcarts were provided to several vendors who lost their carts.
16. Tata took responsibility for the life education of forty-six children of the victims of the terror.
17. This was the most trying period in the life of the organization. Senior managers, including Ratan Tata, were visiting funeral to funeral over the three days that were most horrible.
18. The settlement for every deceased individual ranged from Rs. 36 to 85 lakhs (one lakh rupees translates to approx.. 2000 US\$) in addition to the following benefits:
 - a. Full salary for life for the family and dependents;
 - b. Complete responsibility of education of children and dependents – anywhere in the world.

- c. Full access to medical facilities for the whole family and dependents for the rest of their lives.
- d. All loans and advances were waived off – irrespective of the amount.
- e. Access to a counselor for life was provided for each person.

EPILOGUE

1. How was such passion created among the employees? How and why did they behave the way they did?
2. The organization is clear that it is not something that an individual can take credit for. It is not some training and development that created such behavior. If someone suggests that – everyone laughs.
3. It has to do with the “DNA” of the organization, with the way Tata culture exists and above all with the ethos that prevailed that time. The organization has always been reiterating that customers and guests are the first priority; in this situation, they had a chance to prove that.
4. The hotel business was started by Jamshedji Tata when he was insulted in one of the British hotels and not allowed to stay there.
5. He then created several institutions that later became icons of progress, culture, and modernity. The IISc (Indian Institute of Science) is one such institute. He was told by the rulers that time that he could only acquire land for IISc to the extent he could fence the same. He could afford fencing for only 400 acres.
6. When the HR (human resource) function hesitatingly made a very rich proposal to Ratan Tata in the aftermath of the tragedy, he said, “Do you think we are doing enough?” focusing on what he could do for others and not on what he might receive.

7. The whole approach involved a generous and compassionate perspective: if the organization would spend several hundred crore in re-building the property – why not spend equally on the employees who gave their lives?

This is the practice of ahimsa and does not need any further explanation.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

GENDER SELECTION IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY IN INDIA

In Indian culture, because of the menace of dowry (from bride's family to groom's family) and other factors, the preference for a boy rather than a girl has been prevalent for many centuries. Recently, the technologies of ultrasound and thus the knowledge of the gender during early stages of pregnancy are being used in a significant way by the Indian society at large. What follows from this knowledge is the option to select gender. Here, if the couple decide not to want to have a girl, right away an abortion is performed right there and then in the doctor's office.

In fact, in some parts of India, mobile units/vans will do the ultrasound in one corner of the van and the abortion in the other corner. I am told that Jains too have been involved in this practice, both as Jain physicians providing the service and as young couples as users of these services. I wonder, how many Jains who always consider of one-sensed Vanaspati/plants and vegetables (what they eat in their thali), ever stop and think that they are murdering five-sensed human beings. This is done by engaging all faculties (mental, verbal, and physical) for himsa which amounts to anutanbandhi or sankalpi himsa. Apart from a gory himsa, this practice is causing a severe gender imbalance within the Jain community also. I have read statistics of 75 girls to 100 boys. This will have serious societal and cultural consequences within the community in the next fifteen years if not sooner. What is even stranger is that there is very little

discussion, debate, or movement about this major himsaka practice. The show goes on and the community keeps quiet.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE MENACE OF DOWRY IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY

The Jain community is predominantly a business community and so everything is generally a business and the matrimonial relations are no exception. The menace of dowry (giving money by the bride's family to groom's family) for solemnizing matrimonial relations has been around for a long time. It is common for Jains as well as non-Jains and is practiced in many parts of India (in some places less and in some places more). Within most of the business communities, it is much more common. As the affluence, position, prestige, and power of the groom's family increase, so does the amount of dowry in direct or exponential proportion. Also, every year, no matter how many legal laws are enacted against this, the scope and intensity of dowry keeps on increasing. There is absolutely no sign of decreasing. The dowry is given either under the table or openly (probably both) as a show for the community. One only has to attend an Indian wedding to see the display of affluence. But strangely, no one questions the dowry practice, its modus operandi, scope, size, and why it should be denounced and condemned.

The pity is that generally even the Jain sadhus do not talk much about it. Hardly anyone equates dowry with himsa. As a result, the practice continues and thrives. Many times, this dowry is lifelong and continues (even after the marriage of the girl) in the form of gifts, jewelry, clothing, and cash, through the tradition of milni and furnishings at many Indian festivals, ceremonies, celebrations, births of children, family visits and even during visits to see sick relatives in the hospital.

This practice is horrendous. Many parents cannot afford to get their daughters married. If they do, they incur heavy loans,

lose their homes and lifelong savings, resulting in worrisome lives. Even, quite a few girls remain unmarried or get married to unsuitable and incompatible matches (to the old, invalid, poor, sick, cruel, or criminal). Since the practice of dowry and lifelong giving is common, there are continuous and constant tensions, strife, quarrels, and domestic fights in the families regarding the amount and frequency of the dowry. As a result, some marriages end up like living hells. Bride abuse, torture, burning, and suicides happen quite often. Such is the state of marriages shadowed by dowry.

- o About sixty years ago, one Jain muni (monk) who abhorred this menace came to the prominent area of Jains in Delhi. He delivered many sermons and lectures against this horrible practice and undertook a fast to death till the Jain community takes vows to stop this practice. The community, other than paying lip service and verbal sympathy to his cause, did absolutely nothing. After about two to three weeks of fast, some prominent members of the Jain community went to meet the muni ji and persuaded him to break his fast as the Jain community will not change (their conscience was not even pricked) and his death and sacrifice will go in vain. He realized the reality, broke his fast and to the best of my knowledge never again returned to Delhi.
- o In Rohini (New Delhi), there is a Saroj Hospital. It belongs to a non-Jain family. In the lobby of that hospital, there is a bust of Saroj, a young woman, erected by her parents. It reads “in memory of our loving daughter who became a victim of dowry and death by burning by her in-laws.” There must be stories like Saroj’s amongst Jains, too.
- o As soon as my first child (a son) was born in New Delhi more than fifty years ago, I went to a Jain sadhu and asked him to administer me a lifelong vow that I would neither demand nor accept any dowry, in any shape or form, for my son. The monk thought that I was crazy, but he did administer the oath to me anyway. Luckily, I immigrated to USA, my son got married more than twenty-five years ago,

there was no dowry whatsoever, and hence my vow and willpower remained untested.

- o I go to India quite often. Most of my friends and relatives frequently talk about the practice of dowry in a boasting and praising fashion. They don't think there is anything wrong about it. I find myself lonely and out of reality in such discussions.
- o I have many nieces, nephews, and other relatives in India to whom I am supposed to visit either to give milni (an offering of cash or gold coin) or receive one (depending up on the nature of relationship) to or from my niece's or nephew's in-laws. Because I will not give or take any milni, I generally remain an outcast as they will not invite or meet with me. I am quite happy with this treatment.

AN EXAMPLE OF COMPASSION

- o A few years ago, I came to know about a very prominent, philanthropic, and wealthy Jain in India who wanted to get his daughter married. He owned a large factory in which several thousand people worked. He made an announcement that he personally would arrange (at his own expense) to help the daughters of his fellow workers be married along with his own daughter.

He told everyone that every father/mother of a bride would be allowed to invite the same limited number of guests (around five to eight) and he would do the same. This is in contrast to extravagant weddings with hundreds of guests. To the best of my knowledge, about 400 such marriages of his employees' daughters, along with his own daughter were solemnized in a group marriage and all were treated equally in terms of reception, number of sarees to the bride and other small gifts; there was no difference in treatment between his daughter and other fellow workers' daughters. I bow my head to such considerate and compassionate people.

On October 7, 2010, Indian President Pratibha Patil called "...dowry a curse; that's why girls are killed." President Patil continued, noting "...it was sad to see parents killing their daughters. Dowry is considered a curse in India because of which parents do not want daughters. We have to change this and curb dowry like evils. If there are no girls, there will not be any mothers, sisters, wives and daughters to take humanity forward."

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE TREATMENT OF DAUGHTERS – IN-LAW & YOUNG BRIDES

Time was when daughters-in-law were treated with more consideration than one's own daughters. This scene has been changing very rapidly. In several Jain communities, not only are the daughters-in laws treated worse than servants but also are tortured and abused for lack of insufficient dowry and for many other so-called reasons and pretexts. I personally have seen this. The serious himsa that this entails has already been discussed earlier. I have seen for myself, and been told by others, that in some houses and communities, a mother-in-law is like a cruel dictator. This is true even in Jain communities—they are not free from this menace and custom.

I ask: is this not himsa? Generally, there is not even any discussion about it. I have not seen any except mention of this in a few television serials or soap operas, which are watched more for entertainment rather than for introspection.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

MIXED MARRIAGES: OUTSIDE THE TRADITION, INTER-SECT, INTERCASTE, AND INTER-RELIGIOUS

Not long ago, Jains used to live in close proximity to one another within small geographical areas. Being small in number, Jains normally married with Jains and to a great extent within

the same caste, sub-caste and sect. Due to the migration of Jains all over the globe, globalization, education, travel, instant communication, business, and other far-reaching connections, more and more marriageable boys and girls now search for spouses outside the tradition in which they were born and raised. This has started causing some serious tension and conflicts within family structures and hence himsa to some degree (depending upon the orthodoxy of the families).

I often hear of such cases. Sometimes the differences are very minor; they may involve relationships between members of different sects or sub-sects of Jainism, or just a different caste or gotra within the same sect. I have seen families falling apart either temporarily or permanently. I wonder: how many of us stop and think of ahimsa and anekantavada here? I sincerely hope we have not made them into mere slogans.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ANIMOSITY & CONFLICTS WITHIN VARIOUS SECTS OF JAINISM

Over the years, due to certain geographical and historical factors as well as philosophical interpretations of Jain doctrine, the Jain community split into a few schisms, sects, and sub-sects. As is human nature, these various sects developed some of their own unique customs and rituals but the basic foundation, philosophy, and most of the scriptures and scholars of the Jain Sangh remained the same and in common. As time progressed, these divisions and walls of separation became stronger and community kept on drifting further apart from each other. This too, in spite of the fact that Jains are hardly 0.6% of total population of India, a really very miniscule part.

The process of differentiation and division has reached a point that these keepers of ahimsa now behave like Shias and Sunnis in Islam, each believing the other is in err. Various sects bad mouth each other, will not visit each other's places of worship and monks, and have several legal lawsuits going

on for decades in India's courts about ownership of religious places and properties. Recently, one prominent Jain leader in India told me that it is easier to work and collaborate with Muslims or Christians than with those from another sect of Jainism.

Recently one Jain scholar told me that he made a request to a shwetambar Jain sangh to deliver a talk on Jain Karma theory but his request was turned down initially because the speaker was from the different tradition of Jainism.

If we behave like this, how can we even claim that we Jains are followers of ahimsa and anekantavaad? If we are ahimask, then we must take steps without delay to resolve these issues outside the courts and within the spirit of ahimsa. We must have our talk and walk as one. Pure sermons won't do. Unfortunately the show goes on. It is pathetic.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ANIMAL SHELTERS RUN BY JAINS

As a matter of compassion, Jains in India have opened many animal shelters called Panjrapoles, not only for cows but also for other animals. This is a very noble and laudable act. Many Jiv Daya committees and Jain organizations raise funds just for that purpose, especially during Paryushana Parvas and festivals. I know many Jains in North America who send their donations to India to aid this particular cause. Some Jains in India as well as in North America provide bird feed regularly to pigeons and other birds. Recently I went to a town in Haryana (India) where pigeons and other birds are fed daily by Jains.

Several years ago, I was visiting with Dr. Michael Tobias, a vegan, environmentalist, practitioner of Ahimsa and producer of one-hour video "AHIMSA, Story of Jainism," and at his home, every day he provides bird feed in his backyard in Los Angeles. Thousands of birds come and feast. It makes sense that those of us concerned with the welfare of all creatures would help care for small birds.

But I have also heard from many sources that the management of some of the panjrapoles is not what it should be. In some places, the whole atmosphere is unconducive to the welfare of animals, and instead of reducing the suffering, the animals actually suffer more. I am told there are many factors that contribute to this situation, including the following:

- a) People establish these pinjrapoles out of compassion but they don't understand or have the expertise to manage and provide proper and timely care to birds and animals. Just opening the pinjrapole is not enough. Their proper management is just as much or even more important so that the animals are actually and properly cared for and not allowed to suffer.
- b) In order to save money, the management will hire a few inexperienced persons on very low wages. Often, these untrained, low-wage workers will then steal money meant for the food and water supplies for animals. Hence, the animals end up suffering for lack of enough food and water. The pinjrapole management gets what they pay for.
- c) Generally, there are no proper and adequate arrangements in these panjrapoles for trained veterinary medical care, veterinary doctors, proper medicines, or proper storage of medicines. If there are any medicines, generally these are out of date and unfit for use. In many cases, there are not even basic first-aid kits available and even then the caretaker is not interested in applying or lacks skills in applying and administering proper care.
- d) I have heard from reliable sources, including from Mrs. Maneka Gandhi (the Cabinet Minister in Narendra Modi Cabinet), that in some panjrapoles, the conditions are so bad that even the injured animals are not treated or given any medical aid on the pretext by some Jains "let the animal suffer for its own past karmas". They ask: why should Jains become an obstacle in that process of nirjara (shedding of karmas). If this is true, then that

absurd argument falls flat. Who are we to make such an excuse? Our first, foremost, and primary duty as Jains and as human beings is to reduce the pain and suffering of other creatures. Mrs. Maneka Gandhi was so upset with this argument that she questioned the same Jains why they were willing to take their near relatives even as far as New York for treatment. Why don't they leave them alone to do their karmic nirjara?

- e) What about the animal shelters for the cow's other children? In India, Jains and Hindus have opened hundreds of shelters for aged and sick cows. These are called gaushalas and I have visited quite a few of them. Here the abandoned, sick, and old cows (those beyond the milking age) are brought in from owners, farmers, and milk producers and are cared for until they die their natural deaths. Some of the cow shelters house many thousands of cows (in one place I saw 20,000 cows). At New Pavapuri, in Rajasthan run solely by Jains, I was told, 12,000 cows are normal. All these places are charitable, non-profit, institutions, run purely for service and care of the animals. I applaud this concern for the five-sensed, helpless animals. I have observed that the community—to the best of its abilities—takes care of the female cows but not its other children—the calves, bulls and oxen. It is a law of nature that cows give birth to male and female offspring in nearly equal proportion. The female offspring become cows, give milk and after the milking age the majority of them go to slaughterhouses to be killed for meat and leather. Only a very small percentage of these cows end up in these shelters.

Today, due the mechanization in agriculture and transportation of goods, the utility and use of male offspring (calves, bulls, and oxen) have disappeared and, as a result, the male calf has become an economic liability to its owner. The result is that the male offspring right after birth or shortly thereafter ends up in slaughterhouses. Unfortunately, even though I saw many shelters for the cows, I saw none for the cows' male offspring.

I cannot understand the reason for this indifference or omission. Is saving the life of a cow more sacred than the life of a calf, bull, or ox?

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

THE USE OF ANIMAL BASED PRODUCTS BECOMING PREVALENT IN THE JAIN COMMUNITY

I have said earlier that not many Jains stop, consider, and question the products they wear on their bodies (leather, silk, wool, pearls, corals), use as medicines (vitamins, over the counter and prescribed medicines at home and in hospitals), furnishings in home and in their cars (leather, ivory, silk, wool, animal skins, stuffed animal heads), beauty aids (many cosmetics), entertainment (the use of animals on roadside shows and circuses such as monkeys, bears, elephants, tigers, or lions), or for transportation and joy rides. All of these have a common component—same component, whether severe or less severe, cruelty to helpless creatures, mostly five-sensed.

Still, there are many people both within and outside the Jain community who do understand the nature of cruelty and suffering to animals and diligently try to avoid the use of such products and will find it difficult to believe that so many Jains knowingly participate in such cruelty, but it is true.

- o A few years ago, in the home of a Jain leader in the US, I suddenly noticed a lion and tiger skin spread out on the floor of their living room. This was not only for home decoration but also for a show of their opulence.
- o About twenty-five years ago, I attended a very large Jain function in a town some fifty miles from New Delhi. After the function, one Jain family invited me, along with a few others, to their house for lunch. Prior to the lunch, after washing my hands, I sat at their large dining table with my back to the washbasin. After finishing my lunch, I again

went to the same washbasin to wash and clean my mouth and hands.

While doing so, I looked up towards the ceiling and noticed that right above the washbasin there was the stuffed head of a dead deer, hung for show and display. Believe me: I was shocked. If I had seen that deer's head prior to the luncheon, I would have refused to eat there and just walked out. Another shock to me was that all those other Jains who were facing the washbasin must have seen the same deer's head, but they had no reaction and perhaps enjoyed their meals. Is this how far we Jains have come? Nobody says anything, even to another Jain, and it continues.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

JAINS HAVE BEGUN EATING & SERVING MEAT & ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

This is unfortunately true. It is becoming quite a real scenario in some homes. Some people tell me that the percentage of Jains who eat meat is already quite high (I don't know how high) and is on the rise. Some first generation immigrants in the West and a good number of second and third generation Jains in the UK and North America have taken to flesh eating.

In India, I am told that some Jain kids will not dare to eat non-vegetarian meal at home but may be eating outside at restaurants (away from the watchful eyes of their elders). Dismayed by such trends, one Jain leader painfully told me that time is coming when we will regularly need to ask a Jain to tell whether he/she is a vegetarian Jain or a non-vegetarian Jain. This is unbelievable.

I have been to a few Jain homes in US where the lady of the house and mother cooked non-veg foods for her children, in spite of the fact that both parents claimed to have grown up in strict Jain families in India and were still pure vegetarians themselves. A few times, I have tried to talk to the parents fostering non-vegetarianism in their children, but the father

argued that he does not want his children growing up weak in the US and feeling inferiority in front of their non-veg peers. And also he does not want to deprive them what he did not do himself. You can imagine the difficulty: in this situation, what more could I have said?

I don't have any statistical data or proof, but I am told that in the UK the percentage of Jain youths eating flesh may be as high as thirty to forty percent and is slightly below that here in North America (I ask for forgiveness if I am wrong here). This is simply shocking.

Twenty-five years ago, Acharya Sushil Kumar-ji told me that several times he has been hesitant to stay in some Jain homes in US because he often notices meat items in his hosts' refrigerators.

Another developing trend is that some Jains have begun openly serving meat items in their homes and also at their publicly organized events such as dinners or luncheons to celebrate birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries. I have been to a few such events not even realizing that non-veg meals would be served. What is shocking to me is that some of these people happen to be respectable members of the Jain community.

These days, several successful Jains own their own businesses in fields such as IT, medicine, engineering, and consulting. The trend is developing that even some staunch Jains—the owners of these businesses and prominent executives—will not think twice about serving non-veg meals to their important guests and clients.

One can see and sense where we are heading. To me, it is unthinkable, but the society in general maintains silence. This is the state of affairs. Now, let me narrate some of my own personal experiences and encounters.

o One of my close Jain friends in the US came to this country quite a while ago, did her studies, began a very high level professional job and married to a non-Jain and non-

vegetarian Indian. The husband eats meat. The wife is still a vegetarian as she was raised in a religious Jain family in India. To the best of my knowledge, they don't cook meat at home but the husband and their two children are non-veg.

- o A few years ago, one of their daughters was getting married. We went to attend the engagement ceremony. In the morning, I mentioned to the mother, "I am hoping that there will be no non-veg food during formal dinner today."

The mother assured me that there would not be but the young woman who was going to be engaged later that day argued with her mother and questioned my position in dictating to them whether or not they might serve non-veg food. I did not know about this development between the mother and the daughter. In the evening, after the pooja and engagement formalities, the dinner was being served. In one corner, I saw a meat tray. I was really shocked, and not as a casual outsider. I am considered to be part of this close family.

Now at that stage, what should I have done? Right there and then, without anything on my plate, I began a thirty-six hour fast in front of everyone. They tried to bring a fresh veg plate for me, but I refused to eat. This was my way of protest.

One year later, there was the actual wedding ceremony for the same young woman. Together with all my family, I was invited. This time too, before making the out-of-town trip, I inquired again about the serving of non-veg food. I did not want to repeat or create the same scene, in front of their many guests. This time, they were honest and told me that although they were serving non-veg food, they intended to make available to me a separate, pure, Jain food plate. All of my family, including my wife, my children, and grandchildren went but I refused to go. You can imagine the unpleasantness and arguments within the family by this decision on my part. All were unhappy with me and they all insisted that I am stubborn.

I repeat again—I was not trying to dictate and enforce my personal rules and beliefs on others. In this case, they were part of my near family and this brought great pain and anguish to me. Now please tell me —what else I should have done?

- o At least twenty-five years ago, I read a news item that described a business meeting between Apple Company Chairman, Steve Jobs—who was a vegan—and one of his major vendors. For the vendor, Mr. Jobs was a very important client and they arranged a lavish, red carpet welcome for him at a very posh private club with many entrées including meat items and alcoholic drinks. The host did not know that their chief guest was a vegan. In fact, the irony is that in those days, the host did not even know what veganism was. At the luncheon, the host noticed that their guest was not eating. Finally, when asked, Steve Jobs told them of his food habits. Hearing this, the host was in frenzy regarding what to serve. Mr. Job asked for a fresh fruit plate and the meeting continued. What an uplifting and inspirational story, and what a great example of publicly practicing one's personal beliefs.

I wonder how many Jains exemplify this trait. Luckily, I do know a few Jains who do come close to what Steve Jobs exhibited. I only wish this would become the standard norm within the Jain world.

- o A few years ago in Houston, where I live, a young Jain couple (both born and raised in India in religious Jain families), arranged a large dinner party at their home. For this party, they invited several of their Indian friends, as well as non-Indian friends and colleagues from their office. I came to know from the host that for the non-Indian friends, they were planning to serve non-veg food. Quite frankly, I was shocked—I cannot accept and observe a Jain prepare and serve non –veg food. I immediately talked them out of this. I was relieved, as otherwise I would not have eaten there.

o More recently, I visited another Jain family in North America. While talking about food preferences and what I will not eat, they very plainly and openly told me that they eat meat all the time, as do their children. I was shocked.

Please note that these are not just stray incidents. They are happening more and more and in many cities and towns in North America, UK, and maybe in India as well.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

DONATIONS TO JAIN CHARITIES BY UNETHICAL BUISNESS-PEOPLE AND MEAT TRADERS: IS THIS ACCEPTABLE?

Temple building—this is in full frenzy in India as well as in other places wherever Jains live. Every day elaborate panch-kalyanaks and other celebrations have become common; each costs large sums of money. As we plan and build larger and ever grander temples, the need for more money grows. The question is this: should Jains question the sources of that money? The real truth is that many times, they don't. They want money and it is not generally the recipient's business where that money came from. He is concerned only to raise funds. Here are a few examples:

o For a long time, in India, some Jains traded in opium, tobacco, and other similar commodities. The reason was simple. Such commodities provided huge profits and thus very quickly they became quite rich. Many of these traders, in their minds, consistently separated their life style and religious practices from their ways of earning money. To them, the two were not the same. Now: what to do with those huge sums of money? Of course, only temple building would buy them name, fame and likely a reserved place in heaven. So, most probably, some of the temples in India (I don't know how many but I do suspect) might have been built with such kinds of funds. In one specific case, I did read a mention of this in a Jain magazine by a

granddaughter whose grandparents had built a magnificent temple with money earned from the opium trade.

- o Quite often, I have seen advertisements in Jain magazines for products such as leather, silk, wool, pearls, alcohol and non-veg Indian food restaurants. I wonder why no one stops to question these advertisements? In my opinion, such advertisements in Jain magazines, promote those products and choices.

About fifteen years ago, one famous Jain singer was planning to visit Houston. So, we arranged for a big public performance by him. We also planned to print a special souvenir on this occasion. To raise enough funds for this souvenir, I asked one of my colleagues, with good business connections, to secure some advertisements from Indian businesses, which she did. While going through all the advertisements, I turned down one advertisement from a non-veg Indian restaurant in town. First, there was some concern within the souvenir committee why I had done this. I did explain my reasons for not condoning the meat-related products but some of them felt that I was crazy and fanatic.

After the performance, the same restaurant invited this visiting Jain singer, as well as some of us from the Jain community, to a luncheon reception in the singer's honor. We gladly accepted this gesture and enjoyed a delicious lunch.

After the lunch, when a few of us went to the owner to thank him, he softly asked, "How could you turn down my advertisement in the souvenir campaign, yet you gladly accepted this luncheon reception?" Right way, we realized our grave mistake. I really felt ashamed and thanked the owner for teaching me this practical lesson about money and its origin.

One distant relative of mine has made some good money by owning several liquor and convenience stores where meat is also freely sold. He and his family are strict vegetarians

and regularly observe many Jain rituals including long fasts. A few years ago, this person went to India and wanted to donate some funds to a Jain temple, which was under construction. The administration of the temple knew about the sources of the funds. They flatly rejected the offer, as they did not want to spoil the sanctity of their temple with his donation. What an example! I hope and await more such examples.

- o About a year ago, one very concerned Jain in USA sent out a mass email soliciting opinions about the sources of funds and their donations to charitable and religious Jain causes. He and I both, were surprised that very over-whelming majority of Jains responded that who are we to question the sources of funds? It is none of our business and we should gladly accept them. It is for the donor to worry about his karma and not the donee even though the donee is fully aware of the sources.

In Jainism, “ahimsa” is becoming a slogan just like the name, idea and the image of “Mahatma Gandhi” becomes a slogan for politicians in India during election times.

In May 2011, I had a chat with a prominent Jain in North America who mentioned that he had just come back from India after attending the installation and full panch-kalyanaks of two large Jain pratimas, in two different Jain temples. One of his close relatives had donated these pratimas. My friend was praising him for this great punya karma.

During the chat, I just asked my friend about the business of the donor. His answer was that he owns and runs a large silk mill in India. I was shocked. One makes a living and amasses wealth (parigraha) by running a slaughter house (for three-sensed silk insects) by killing millions of live, three-sensed silk worms daily, and from that slaughterhouse loot, he funds two Jain pratimas. What more can be said. This is what we are evolving into. I wonder how many Jain temples have been or are being built and various rituals done with

wealth earned through himsatmak means. I suppose the way we talk and walk are now two entirely different things.

I have heard, but don't have a proof, that even outside India, a few of the major donations for the building of expensive Jain temples are not free from such dubious money either.

I wonder when the Jain community will start reflecting on the source and refusing such donations (in any shape or form, may it even be in the disguise of ghee bolis) for Jain causes such as for temples, jiv Daya, Panch-kalyanaks, teertha yatras, seminars, or conventions. If we do not refuse, and if we do not care about the means by which the money has been earned, then we Jain sanghs are not only condoning such acts and behavior, but are also losing any influence we might exercise as a community on the behavior of such donors.

Mahatma Gandhi always reminded us that means and ends of actions should be in harmony and ends should never justify any means. He said, "If we want to cross the ocean, we cannot do so by a bullock cart. We must use a boat or a ship."

There is no such thing as, "All is fair and acceptable when it comes to accepting donations."

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

UNKOWINGLY BECOMING NON-VEGETARIAN WHEN GOING OUT TO EAT

In life, many of us have occasions and chances to eat outside the home in both veg. and non-veg restaurants. Let me share here a few of my own experiences about being careful about what to eat.

In North America, Europe, and I am told even in India, many Indian restaurants are notorious for not telling customers about the animal-based ingredients in their food preparations, which they call and serve as "vegetarian" foods. Examples include Naans, Roomali Roti, and also some sweets. Most of us think that these are vegetarian items but the fact is that

many restaurants add eggs in the flour dough, for example, and the further irony is that restaurant owners will neither tell nor write about it on their printed menu.

- o In one city in USA, I was told that one Hindu Mandir used to get lunch (with naans) catered every Sunday from a restaurant of a devotee of that temple. The food was served as prashad to the Sunday congregation. The restaurant always used eggs in the naans and never told the temple about it. Thus the prashad itself was no longer pure veg. When I told the temple about it, the truth came out in the open. So my advice is to avoid Naans and Roomali Roti. Instead, order plain roti or tandoori roti. You will be safe.
- o In supermarkets, fast food and grocery stores, some of the food items marketed as vegetarian may not be vegetarian. Even from the list of printed ingredients, it is difficult to be very sure. Please be careful. Some of our youths here when specifically contacted the manufacturers, the truth came out but not easily.
- o Whenever my family and I go out to eat, especially pizza, we always ask the waiter to wash his hands, wash the cutting knife and the cutting board, put on new gloves and then make our pizza and other food items, including sandwiches. If he refuses to do so, we don't eat there and find some other place. We follow the same practice everywhere, including at Subway fast food restaurants.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ANIMALS& BIRDS AS PETS IN JAIN HOMES

In some Jain homes, I have seen dogs, cats, rabbits, and parrots as pets. The use of live animals and birds as pets is increasing in Jain families. Dogs and cats are not caged, but rabbits and parrots are. Also, it is not uncommon to find Jain homeowners who gladly and regularly serve non-vegetarian foods to their dogs and cats. I am not against keeping pets as long as they are not caged. In the case of a dog or a cat, in

keeping them as pets, there is no himsa involved. In fact these animals are treated with the most care and love, but the serving of meat products as food to them is something I am not able to support. Similarly, the caging of birds involves himsa.

o I am not at all an expert on dogs or any kind of pets, but I do want to share one story with you. About thirty-five years ago, one of our close relatives in the US brought his big German shepherd dog to our house for us to look after for nearly six months while he was going overseas for an assignment. We said that we were happy to keep him, only on one condition —that we would neither buy and nor serve, directly or indirectly, any kind of non-veg food to the dog. Right from day one, we fed the dog vegetarian food and the dog thrived without any problem.

o Similarly, Professor Gary Francione recently told me that he keeps several dogs as pets, but all his dogs are vegan. Bravo.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

CONCLUSION

As I have been saying again and again, ahimsa should not be limited to thali (food plate) only. We must look into how we treat our fellow human and non-human beings in our customs and traditions.

HIMSA IN MAKING A LIVING (AARAMBHI HIMSA)

In some cases, himsa committed in the name of earning a living, in business and in investment, for example, exceeds and surpasses many other kinds of himsa in intensity, magnitude, and the number of living creatures affected or harmed.

Please note that many of the examples mentioned here are meant only to create a personal dialog and self-introspection and do not mean that all Jains, or even a majority of the Jains, engage in these practices.

AHIMSA & ETHICS IN BUSINESS: A PRE-REQUISITE

The primary objective of any business is to make money and to maximize the profit or return on investment. There is nothing wrong with this objective. A business is not a charity. Business people provide necessary goods and services to their clients and to the society. Just consider the occupation of farming. A farmer grows food to make his living but at the same time fulfils the basic needs of humanity; in securing his personal livelihood, he sustains other communities with employment, food, and goods.

Gandhi Ji said, “Business without morality is a deadly sin,” and “There is enough in this world for every one’s needs but not enough even for one man’s greed.”

In the pursuit of maximum—some say insane and obscene levels of profits—some businesses lately have been engaging in and resorting to unethical practices which cause nothing but himsa to a large number of people, animals, birds, and plants.

ACHORYA (NON-STEALING) VOW (ANUVRAT) and JAINS

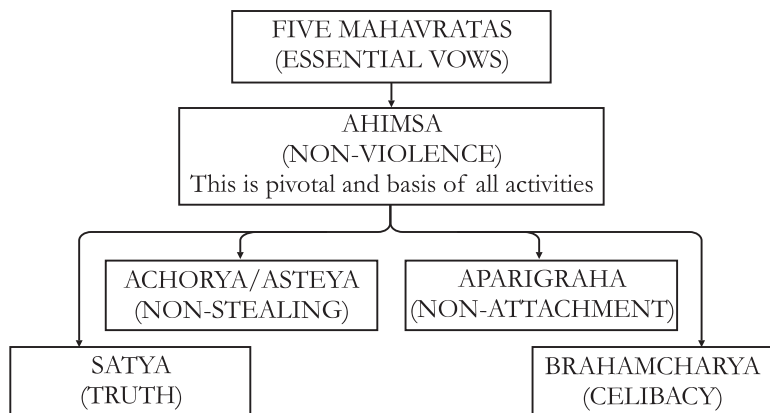
One of the five essential vows in Jainism for monks and householders (called mahavrat for monks and anuvrat for householders) is the lifelong vow of achorya or non-stealing. Many people simply think that this vow pertains to non-stealing and in their views since they don't steal, they don't pay much attention to it. In reality, the vow of achorya means a whole lot more. In simple terms it means not taking any item or services that do not belong to me and also without the full knowledge and willing consent of the giver. It also means that the item or service that is given to me should be in full compliance of the law of the society and also should respect the moral and karmic laws as much as possible. The dealings should be open, fair, transparent and honest. Both the receiver and giver should be able to disclose its full contents to all those who have a need to know. In fact it is an ethical contract of human behavior for dealings, trade, commerce and business in the society.

On October 3, 2014, at an International Conference on Business Ethics at Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont, California, I gave a talk on this subject (titled: What is common between Achorya (non-Stealing) Anuvrat and Business Ethics?). I reproduce below a part of my PowerPoint presentation.

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT AND PIVOTAL VRATAS (VOWS)

- o These vows are the weapon of spiritual mission during the journey of one's life.
- o We Jains call them Maha (Great) Vratas

- o These vows guide and control the life of monks, nuns and householders.



THE FIVE ESSENTIAL VOWS THAT BRING ABOUT AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

WHAT IS ACHORYA /ASTEYA?

- o Literally ACHORYA means Non-Stealing.
- o Most common and prevalent understanding such as: thievery, robbery, house break-in, burglary, snatching, acquiring what one desires by illegal, irrational and illegitimate ways and means and misappropriation of funds etc. are commonly understood as stealing.
- o Achorya is all of that plus a lot more.
- o Jain Acharya Umasvati defines Achorya as: *“taking anything which is not willingly given”*.
- o Not taking any item or services that do not belong to me.
- o Not taking without the full knowledge and willing consent of the giver and without any threat and duress.
- o Should be in full compliance of the law of the society.
- o Should respect the moral and karmic laws as much as possible.
- o The dealings should be open, fair, honest, transparent, and not be hiding any facts.

- o **Both the receiver and giver should be able to disclose its full contents to all and to those who have a need to know.** (This is the Most Important Test)
- o *It is an ethical contract of human behavior for dealings, trade, commerce and business in the society.*

REASONS FOR VIOLATING THE VOW OF ACHORYA

GREED, GREED and GREED only

When a person falls prey to greed, he is tempted to steal others' property, needs and comforts. Greed is the root cause of all corruption, unethical conduct and practices.

LANDSCAPE OF STEALING

- o Instigating others and contributing to the act and commitment of stealing
- o Receiving or aspiring for stolen property
- o Creating inequalities and discriminating based on creed, race, caste, gender, religious beliefs
- o Charging exorbitant fees and not delivering the quality in education and services
- o Smuggling, infringing intellectual property (patents, trade secrets, copy-rights, trademarks, product specifications and Customer list etc.)
- o Plagiarism
- o Stealing of Milk from Cows
- o Corruption and Accepting bribes for favors granted
- o Adulteration, mixing of material of lower values and quality with the higher value of identical material
- o Willfully cheating and deceiving customers and patients in the delivery of medical treatments and many other services

- o Use of false, bogus and inaccurate measures of weights, distances, lengths, money
- o Not delivering promised or expected quantity (short weighing and measuring)
- o Fooling and deceiving customers (via false advertising, using “fine print” to share important information, and deceptive packaging)
- o Falsifying account books and promising unreasonable, “sky high” returns to investors and inflating stock prices)
- o Outright cheating, theft, swindling and embezzlement
- o Hoarding essential need items and profiting by selling them at excessive profits
- o Dealing and trading in items that are derived by himsa to animals and humans
- o Trading and marketing in drugs, narcotics, and other banned items
- o Degrading the environment (polluting water, air, and earth)
- o Shipping hazardous wastes to poor countries
- o Deforestation
- o Creating and maintaining unsafe and hazardous work environments
- o Treating workers and employees unfairly and with discrimination in compensation and rewards
- o Smuggling, abetting, aiding, and profiting from unpatriotic and terrorist activities
- o Offering and accepting bribes to gain unfair advantage and depriving the same benefits to others
- o +++++ A LOT MORE

VIOLATION OF THE VOW OF ACHORYA

This is GRAVEST & HEINOUS HIMSA

- o Cheating, adulteration, greed, and corruption in any business or human endeavor are prime sources of himsa

- o One must be extra vigilant to avoid becoming a practitioner of such unethical behavior
- o SOCIETY CALLS THEM WHITE COLLAR CRIMES
- o These are heinous and deserve the highest punishment, even higher than the murder because these people destroy not one but millions of lives.
- o It is nothing less than a Cancer in the Society

SOME RECENT TRENDS

- o WHITE COLLAR CRIMES ARE INCREASING WORLD OVER.
- o Frequency, Size, intensity, scope and % increase is directly proportional to affluence.
- o Concentration and dis-proportionate accumulation of wealth in the society.
- o JAINS ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM THIS EITHER
- o *“Occupy Wall street/Dalal Street” or “Wall street Occupies us”*
- o IN SOME MAJOR FINANCIAL SCANDALS IN INDIA, JAINS SHARE THE BLAME TOO
- o Culture to become rich and super rich instantly.
- o Ever expanding Influence, Partnership, involvement and Collusion of MBA, Accounting Law and Advertising professionals in Business is contributing significantly to GREED World over.

RECENT EXAMPLES & TRENDS

- o ENRON
- o Ernie Madoff
- o ECONOMIC MELTDOWN
- o SKYHIGH COMPENSATION and BONUSES to a few

- o Deceptive Advertisement. Case of pure Juice drink with pomegranate juice in USA.
- o 50% OFF common ads; Off what? Very common practice
- o Fine prints in ads;
- o Deceptive packaging (examples);
 - Oranges and grapes at train stations in India.
 - Tooth paste packaging
 - Cinnamon Stick and many other packaging
- o Business Schools did not teach courses on Business Ethics. Thus, they have created many of their graduates trained in maximizing profits/returns instantly and by any means.
- o Only recently, business Schools have started offering courses in ethics but still in India, not many schools do.

Sayings by: MAHATMA GANDHI

That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values.

Any act of injury done from self-interest, whether amounting to killing or not, is doubtless himsa.

There is sufficient in the word for man's need but not for man's greed.

A businessman who lies and cheats his simple minded and ignorant customers cannot hope to be saved.

Business without a morality is a deadly sin.

While one could write not just one, but many books on of all these topics, in this chapter I will touch upon only a selected few. All of the included topics have strong footprints of himsa; in fact some of them amount to white-collar crime and colossal himsa.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INVESTMENT, BUSINESS, AND AHIMSA - HOW DO I CHOOSE?

Ahimsa and one's personal work are directly inter-connected. One cannot nor should not separate the two. There is no justification for making a living by himsamatmak (violent) means and then coming home, practicing vegetarianism, and doing all the religious rituals. The practice of ahimsa is a "24/7/365" daily and committed business. The doors of ahimsa are never closed.

Unfortunately, some people have created a mental firewall between ahimsa and making a living. As a result, some Jains are now engaged in all sorts of businesses that are not appropriate. Many of these businesses are outright himsamat. Jains today trade and deal in products derived by and from torturing or killing animals, birds, reptiles, and insects. This category includes businesses involved in the trading of items of silk, leather, wool, pearls, coral, ivory, shellac, and many animal-based medicines and food items. The same applies to investments where one directly or indirectly makes his living by supporting industries and businesses that engage in himsamat products.

I wonder how many Jains will stop and think that it is improper to buy shares and stocks of McDonalds, for example, or companies which by their very nature of business kill animals, sell meat and meat products, pollute the environment, or design, manufacture, and sell products that kill people and other forms of life. Examples include machineries for slaughter houses, for wars and warfare, guns, bombs, ammunition, cigarettes, opium, liquor, gutkas (tobacco-based materials in India), and drugs—these are nothing but himsamat supported by the investors and traders.

THE MENACE OF ADULTERATION & THE JAIN COMMUNITY

In India (and this may be the same in some other countries as well), the cancer of adulteration is not only widespread

but is still growing very fast. As a result, this cancer has spread to nearly the entire body of Indian society. Hardly anything in India remains unadulterated—most food and drink items, medicines, petrol or gasoline, building materials, automobile parts, and jewelry are adulterated, substandard, cheap duplicates of the originals, poor in workmanship and quality, imitations and with deceptive labeling. Even something as simple as drinking water is being infected by greed for profit, which leads to adulterating even this. With the rise of affluence and the economy, the scope, intensity, and frequency of this disease keeps on spreading to newer heights.

Adulteration and deceptive qualities, especially in building construction, food, and medicines are the worst kinds of himsa, sin, and crimes. A robber, a murderer, or a criminal will kill or injure just a few, but the adulterers, makers, and sellers of deceptive, adulterated, and poor quality products kill not just a few but millions of innocent five-sensed human and non-human beings. This is a farce and absolutely hypocritical to care for one-sensed beings (mostly in food practices) but engage in trade and businesses where thousands of five-sensed beings are maimed, tortured, or subjected to slow deaths and agony.

In India, and in several other countries too, adulteration is a national disease; it is not necessarily created by Jains but some of the Jains too are part of this menace.

Jains are business people and they are engaged in manufacture and trades of many of the items listed above. How often do the worshippers of ahimsa and Jinās stop and reflect upon what they are doing directly and indirectly, as well as sometimes knowingly and willfully? Why is there a disconnect between devotion and worship, and daily business practices?

Let me share a few of my own observations. Beyond my own limited observations, there are thousands of additional such occurrences every day.

ADULTERATION IN FOOD ITEMS

In India, adulteration in food and many other items has become normalized and individual cases are not exceptions. Unfortunately, the majority of Indians accept this without question as a part of new culture. All kinds of food items (including milk, ghee, yoghurt, paneer, sweets, flour, spices, drinks, vegetables and fruits), petrol for automobiles, and even drinking water are adulterated. Not only that, but some merchants also engage in cheating in quantity (providing less weight and volume than agreed upon or advertised). Some Jains are no different. The Jain community normally does not question such practices. In fact, those who become rich from this horrible practice give donations to the Jain community to win name, fame, recognition and respect in the community. During the last few decades, this menace has increased exponentially; it is like a cancer in society with no signs of decreasing.

A Memory of Adultration and Cheating

I take you back in time to about 1948 (I was only eleven old years then) in Delhi. After Independence, there used to be ration for all basic daily necessities such as wheat, flour, sugar, cloth, and cooking fuel (kerosene). There were government-sanctioned and approved ration shops all around the city where one could buy (once a week) the allotted quantity of these items at the government-approved retail prices by showing an official ration card. One of my acquaintances (not a relative) had such a ration shop. Every week, he would receive the allotted quantity of these items in wholesale from government warehouses, which he would then sell in retail. People frequently had to wait in line to get their allotted weekly ration. One night, I had a chance to sleep at that shop—there were some sleeping quarters in the back of the shop. The owner, a devout Jain, woke up about four o'clock in the morning, did his samayak (prayer), and then opened all the bags of the wheat flour (may be ten of them) on the concrete

floor. Nearby, he had stored another ten bags of sodium silicate, or soapstone powder.

The price of this sodium silicate powder (mostly used in soap making) was about less than half of the price of wheat flour. He opened the ten bags of the sodium silicate powder as well and mixed all of them with the wheat flour; thus ending up with twenty bags of adulterated flour. He distributed ten bags of the adulterated flour through the ration shop and the remaining ten in the black market at probably double or triple the price of flour set by the government.

Let me remind you that sodium silicate powder is whiter and finer than wheat flour and mixes very well with the wheat flour. In fact, the customers liked this adulterated flour so much (because it was whiter and finer and, so they thought, better) but little did they know that the adulterated flour was a cause of their slow but very painful death. The thought of committing all this deception and killing five-sensed, human beings did not bother the owner or that Jain shravak a bit, in my opinion. I am sure he continued this practice as long as he could.

A friend of mine here in Houston recently sent me a YouTube video about adulteration in food in Pakistan (kindly note that Jains have nothing to do with it) with a comment, “Friends even though this show is from Pakistan, I wonder how good it could be in India? They use dead animals, rats, discarded bones, you name it they use it to make ghee, oil, gelatin and many daily use items! The Jalebi and Pakoras you may be eating are made from these! A must watch –a ten minute TV report can save your lives - Pakistan’s ‘edible oil industry.’”

Click here to view the video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7NPgrCvg-0>

Note, by including this video here, I am not at all implying that Jains engage in this kind of trade or adulteration, but one thing is clear—there are no boundaries, inhibitions, or

monopoly by any community when it comes to adulteration; only the verities, size and scale may be different.

Now you decide; is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ADULTERATION IN MEDICINES

It is a well-known, well-reported and well-published fact that more than fifty percent of medicines in India are spurious, substandard, unhygienic, and adulterated. One can only imagine the catastrophic effects of such medicines on human and non-human beings. I personally don't know what percent of Jains are engaged in the manufacture of such medicines, but I do know that a large number of Jains are engaged in the trade, distribution and dispensing of such products as medical practitioners, pharmacists and drugstore (chemist shop) owners and workers. Many of them are very aware of which products are adulterated. They are not ignorant about it. Some of my own relatives in India own drugstores, but the greed for making quick money does not bother them, I suppose.

Recently, 'The Wall Street Journal' (a very prestigious and well-regarded daily newspaper in the US) ran a story entitled, "India's Fake Drugs are a Real Problem." The Food and Drug Administration of the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh recently conducted a series of raids throughout its region to uncover counterfeit drugs. The raids yielded large quantities of substandard medicines and resulted in several arrests. The counterfeit drug trade thrives in India; the profits are enormous. The public health consequences of the counterfeit drug trade are serious. These products, often adulterated with road paint and chalk, look identical to the antibiotics they pretend to be. Thousands of people probably die every year either because they are poisoned by bad ingredients or because the counterfeit doesn't treat the victim's malady."

Many years ago, one cardiologist from a famous hospital in Delhi told me that many a times when he gives glucose to a patient, very soon after, the patient develops high temperature fever; only because the glucose was adulterated.

Do we ever stop and think that it is not just others but our own selves, our own families that can also become victims of these adulterated medicines some day? I hear such stories all the time, but with greed and a desire to make a quick buck, the disease keeps on spreading.

Now you decide: is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ADULTERATION IN PATROL/GASOLINE AND DIESEL

I have come to know that quite often, (it was a common practice until a few years ago) many patrol station owners were engaged in mixing kerosene and some other cheaper fuels with gasoline/patrol and diesel fuels used in automobiles and in agriculture. Also, cheating by not dispensing/delivering the right quantity/volume has been very common. The dispensing meters are intentionally set in favor of the patrol pump owner and are barely calibrated, so as to dispense a lesser amount. In addition, since there are very few self-service patrol pumps in India, the attendants used to try to cheat here, too, by dispensing less and charging more. So one can see that the practice in this trade was to adulterate the product, dispense less, and charge more. What a fast way to become rich! I personally became a victim of such practices in India a few times.

A few years ago, I was going through the State of Rajasthan in India. On one patrol pump the big advertisement proclaimed, “Now Shudh [pure or not adulterated] and Pooraa [full quantity, also] bhi,” implying that up to that point, none of that had been true.

As retailers, many Jains own patrol and diesel stations. Quite a few are in the wholesale trading of such commodities as well.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

ADULTERATION & POOR QUALITY IN BUILDING MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION

Again, it is not uncommon to find builders who try to cut

corners wherever possible by using sub-standard building materials and violating the construction codes and standards. Every day, one can read in newspapers in India about buildings falling down, collapsing, and catching fires; people are killed due to these very practices.

About fifteen years ago, there was a major earthquake in the city of Ahmedabad and parts of Gujarat State. As a result, several high-rise buildings collapsed, trapping and killing many people. I read in newspapers that some of the designers and builders of these buildings were Jains. There are many large and small Jain builders in India. I hope they each stop and reflect on the level and intensity of himsa for which they are directly and indirectly responsible.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

Here I have very briefly touched up on just a few of the items such as food, medicines, and building materials that can be adulterated and lead to loss of life for living beings. In my opinion, the scope and the net of this disease is extremely vast. Hardly any commodity item, trade, or service is immune from this.

In 2009, one jeweler (a non-Jain) in India shared with me that one of his relatives opened a gold jewelry shop in Mumbai. Just for the shop premises he paid a very handsome price (called “pagri”) just to rent it, and then he spent substantial amount of money on furnishing and on inventory. As a result, the interest alone on that investment was so large, that the only way he could make some profit was to practice cheating in the quality and quantity of the jewelry items. What a story!

When I was born in India, the water was potable and one would never think or imagine that one day water would be sold in India. In fact, such a practice was hated and frowned upon. These days, since water has become a multi-million dollar (more rightly multi-billion dollar) business in India, there is widespread adulteration of filtered water with dirty or

unhygienic water. One can read such stories quite often; many a times large corporations are the ones behind it.

One can easily find imitation, deceptively labeled, and products suffering from poor workmanship all over India. All of these have taken a major toll on the lives, well-being, and emotions of people and are the fruit of nothing but greed and hence, himsa.

Are Jains free from such practices? I am not sure.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

CHEATING IN THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

This is a major industry where huge profits are made very quickly every day, mostly by cheating the customers and users. A significant number of Jains are engaged in this value chain as physicians, service providers, hospital owners and workers, clinic and nursing home owners, chemist and drugstore owners, drug manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers, and the list goes on.

The following news item was forwarded to me recently by a friend of mine. The message is very clear and self-explanatory. I feel most probably Jains are not immune from this menace, either.

“Do Not Get Sick In India”.

“Every doctor affiliated to a hospital in India must perform a certain number of surgeries and physicians must refer a certain number of patients for laboratory tests, X-rays and MRIs, endoscopies and ultrasound etc. If not they are removed from the hospital registries and premises...Treatment is given not according to the disease but according to the wealth of the patient.

Most of these observations are either completely or partially true. Corruption has many names. Professionals and businessmen of various sorts indulge in unscrupulous

practices. I recently had a chat with some doctors, surgeons, and owners of nursing homes about the tricks of their trade. Here is what they shared:

In general, kickbacks for lab tests happen about forty to sixty percent of the time. When a doctor (whether family doctor/general physician, consultant, or surgeon) prescribes tests—pathology, radiology, X-rays, MRIs etc. —the laboratory conducting those tests gives commissions. In South and Central Mumbai – commissions happen about forty percent of the time. In the suburbs north of Bandra—a whopping 60 percent! A single GP probably earns a lot more in this way than in the consulting fees that you pay.

30-40% for referring to consultants, specialists, and surgeons: When your friendly GP refers you to a specialist or surgeon, he gets 30-40%.

30-40% of total hospital charges: If the GP or consultant recommends hospitalization, he will receive a kickback from the private nursing home as a percentage of all charges including ICU, bed, nursing care, and surgery.

“Sink tests.” Some tests prescribed by doctors are not needed. They are there to inflate bills and commissions. The pathology lab understands what is unnecessary. These are called “sink tests” and the blood, urine, and stool samples collected will be thrown away.

Admitting the patient to “keep him under observation”: People go to cardiologists feeling unwell and anxious. Most of them aren’t really having a heart attack, and cardiologists and family doctors are well aware of this. They admit such safe patients, put them on a saline drip with mild sedation, and send them home after three to four days after charging them a fat amount for ICU, bed charges, and visiting doctors fees.

ICU minus intensive care: Nursing homes all over the suburbs are run by doctor couples or as one-man-shows. In such places, nurses and ward boys are tenth class drop-outs in

ill-fitting uniforms and bare feet. These “nurses” sit at the reception counter, give injections and saline drips, perform ECGs, apply dressings and change bandages, and assist in the operation theatre. At night, they even sit outside the Intensive Care Units; there is no resident doctor. In case of a crisis, the doctor—who usually lives in the same building—will turn up after twenty minutes, after this nurse calls him. Such ICUs admit safe patients to fill up beds. Genuine patients who require emergency care are sent elsewhere to hospitals having a Resident Medical Officer (RMO) around-the-clock.

Unnecessary caesarian surgeries and hysterectomies: Many surgical procedures are done to keep the cash register ringing. Caesarian deliveries and hysterectomies (removal of uterus) are high on the list. While the woman with labor-pains is screaming and panicking, the obstetrician who gently suggests that a caesarian is best seems like an angel sent by God! Menopausal women experience bodily changes that make them nervous and gullible. They can be frightened by words like “cysts” and “fibroids” that are in almost every normal woman’s radiology reports. When a gynecologist gently suggests womb removal “as a precaution,” most women and their husbands agree without a second thought.

Cosmetic surgery advertised through newspapers: Liposuction and plastic surgery are not minor procedures. Some are life-threatening. But advertisements make them appear as easy as cosmetic procedures like facials and waxing. The Indian medical council has strict rules against such misrepresentation. But nobody is interested in taking action.

Indirect kickbacks from doctors to prestigious hospitals: To be on the panel of a prestigious hospital, there is give-and-take involved. The hospital expects the doctor to refer many patients for hospital admission. If he fails to send a certain number of patients, he is quietly dumped. And so he likes to admit patients even when there is no need.

“Emergency surgery” on dead bodies: If a surgeon hurriedly wheels your patient from the Intensive Care Unit to the

operation theatre, refuses to let you go inside and see him, and wants your signature on the consent form for “an emergency operation to save his life,” it is likely that your patient is already dead. The “emergency operation” is for inflating the bill; if you agree for it, the surgeon will come out fifteen minutes later and report that your patient died on the operation table. And then, when you take delivery of the dead body, you will pay OT charges, anesthesiologist’s charges, and many more fees that were unwarranted. What an insult to take advantage of the sick and grieving.”

Doctors are humans too. You can’t trust them blindly. Please understand the difference between young surgeons and older ones. The young ones who are setting up nursing homes, for example, have heavy loans to settle. To pay back the loan, they have to perform as many operations as possible. Also, to build a reputation, they have to perform a large number of operations and develop their skills. So, at first, every case seems fit for cutting. But with age, experience, and prosperity, many surgeons lose their taste for cutting, and stop recommending operations.

Physicians and surgeons, to a man with a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. Surgeons like to solve medical problems by cutting, just as physicians first seek solutions with drugs. So, if you take your medical problem to a surgeon first, the chances are that you will unnecessarily end up on the operating table. Instead, please go to an ordinary GP first.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK PLACE

In India, Jains own many businesses ranging from simple trading to big manufacturing factories. As a result, they employ a large number of people as shop floor workers. Since all life forms are equal and all feel pain and pleasure, Jains are taught to have compassion for all forms of life. But in

India (I am sure everywhere else, too) some human lives are in practice considered better, worth more, more precious and superior to other humans. Some human lives can be bought or rented cheaply without the thought that they too have feelings, emotions, and pains just like we each have.

I have seen that concern for occupational, safety and health of employees and workers is significantly lacking and little consideration is normally given to this very important aspect in India. In United States and in many industrialized countries, laws and regulations have been enacted, updated and enforced to improve the health and safety of all people at work including that of the employers. Safer the environment at work, fewer the accidents, less legal, insurance and compensation expenses, fewer number of days lost due to accidents, less factory and equipment damage, better employee morale, higher productivity, more business, more profits and all around a win-win situation for everybody.

Here are a few additional examples of my observations in India.

◇ Once I was touring a metalworking workshop operated by a very devout and strict Jain who required himself his Pooja every day before opening his factory. He had about thirty workers in his shop working and walking in the factory wearing chappals made out of rubber tires. Because of the nature of metalworking operation, there were lots of very sharp-edged sheet metal cuttings scattered all around his workshop floor. When I saw the workers working there with their flimsy rubber chappals, I was appalled to see that if any worker stepped on those sharp sheet metal cuttings, he would have a large cut with lots of bleeding which may further lead to severe and maybe fatal infections. In the West, it is mandatory for industrial workers to use steel soles and steel-toed shoes. This may cost about Rs. 1000-2000 (I guess) for each worker, for a total investment of Rs 50,000 for the entire factory and these shoes last for at least ten years. I suggested to the owner the dangers of his workers

walking in those chappals and about the need for steel sole shoes. He immediately shrugged me off as his conscience did not bother him about the harm and himsa to these five-sensed human beings. His total concentration was on one-sensed himsa (by being a vegetarian) and maximizing his profits at the cost of his own workers who bring him the profits with their sweat and blood.

- ◇ About twenty years ago, I was visiting a factory that makes various kinds of metal wires. After drawing the wire to the size, many bundles/rolls of wire are then loaded into an electric furnace for heat treatment to make the wire soft. In this case, the furnace was a big hole in the concrete floor having a diameter of four feet and a depth of about fifteen feet. All along the furnace wall (in the hole) were electric resistance wires that when hot provide heat (maybe up to 500 Celsius or more). The top rim of the furnace hole was flush with the concrete floor. The whole area in the factory was also poorly lit.

I saw the workers loading many bundles of wire into the furnace by using a manually operated crane. They all were standing very close to the top rim of the furnace which was still hot. Seeing this, I immediately realized that if any worker had a slight slip of foot, distraction (due to the telephone, noise, or talk, for example), dizziness, or heart attack, he would fall straight into the furnace and would never come out alive. I explained all this to the owner, a devout Jain. His first response was to point out to me that nothing like had happened so far. I told him not to wait for that accident. God forbid if it does ever happen, he will never be able to sleep for the rest of his life, not to speak of the legal repercussions. I also suggested a simple solution for this and asked him to make a wall of bricks about six inches high along the rim of the furnace, which he said he would do. I returned again two years later but nothing had changed. Again, the life of a five-sensed human being was not registering in his conscience.

◇ I visited a small textile mill, in operation to spin yarn, owned by a Jain. He had about fifty workers in his factory making yarn. As a result of the yarn spinning process, the atmosphere in the factory was extremely clouded with lint fibers, dust, and many other particles floating in the air. For me, the air inside was so bad that I had difficulty breathing. I again thought that all of these workers are breathing this dirty air and acquiring all kinds of lung diseases, including TB, and thus significantly cutting short their lives. I talked to the owner and suggested that the proper solution was to buy air masks/filters fitted for wearing over the nose, which do not cost lot of money, and to also install exhaust fans. He ignored my advice completely saying that this is done in the US, but not here. He had no concern for the lives of his workers who make lots of money for him.

The above three examples are just simple example of a pure lack of understanding on this issue. I am sure, readers know or can find hundreds of such examples.

The whole world is familiar with the leak of toxic gases in Bhopal at a factory owned by Union Carbide. Many thousand workers got injured and died, and in terms of compensation, even after nearly thirty years, the affected people are still suffering without any meaningful compensation. The Indian laws in this respect are very weak, enforcement is another story, and the people who got rich at the expense of the affected workers are the attorneys and politicians. Hardly any justice has been meted out to these poor people.

I am sure there are hundreds if not thousands of Bhopal type accidents (though perhaps not necessarily of that magnitude) that happen or are waiting to happen in India. The question that I ask is, does anyone's conscience bother him and if yes, what are we doing about it? Another question that I ask is "How many Jain lawyers, attorneys, leaders, sadhus, activists, and physicians came to help the people affected by the Bhopal Gas Leak, then or now?

Recently I was told by a senior executive in India that when large corporations prepare proposals and bid on multibillion dollar design and construction projects, (for example for fertilizer, cement, chemical, and refinery plants), they normally factor-in about fifteen percent extra cost for industrial accidents, injuries, death, litigation, and compensation. But the same people will they hardly spend a dime to look at the reasons and occurrences of accidents, how to mitigate them, or adopt safer design practices to begin with. They are contented in paying the compensation but not in creating safer working environments. What a callousness and disregard for himsal.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT (PARYAAVARAN), A SIN AGAINST HUMANITY— ENVIRONMENT, ECOLOGY, POLLUTION, HIMSA & THE JAIN COMMUNITY

All living things are connected in nature, dependent on each other for continued survival. For each of us, life includes birth, reproduction and death – with each group of living organisms having its own unique life cycle. Some living things have a short life span. While several other species have life cycles lasting hundreds of years. In order to survive and grow, all organisms need to adapt to their habitat, have their basic needs met and overcome many obstacles. If environment changes occur more quickly than some organisms can adjust, such as sudden changes in climate, the survival and reproduction of certain living things may be impacted.

These days the survival of the planet, and in fact of the entire human and non-human race, depends on the planet we live on (Jains call it Jambu Dweep). There is much discussion about greenhouse gases, ozone layer, shortage of water, the warming up of the environment, pollution, and ecology. As a result a new movement called environmentalism is in vogue. We Jains rightly believe that several thousand years ago, we talked, preached, practiced, and developed the whole concept

of environmentalism. Yet the fact is that I find little actual environmentalism in the Jain community. Yes, there are several pockets of environmentalism that do exist. For example, the lifestyle of our monks and nuns, and also of some shravaks and shravikas are good and model examples of environmentalism. Outside this, in general, I have not seen or known of any talk, activism, movement, practice or Jain leaders to inspire the community and draw their attention to this essential issue. Environmentalism has a direct connection with ahimsa. If we pollute, we create suffering and most probably the death and extinction of many species. Beyond that we endanger our own survival.

I have seen Jains wasting food, water, electricity, using and discarding paper plates, polythene bags, and many other resources as if there is no tomorrow. Jains are as much polluters (maybe sometimes more due to their affluence) as anybody else. One Indian Central Cabinet Minister recently remarked that if there is a Nobel Prize for filth and dirt, surely India will win that every year. Just go around India and see the filth everywhere. Jain surroundings are no cleaner than other surroundings. There is very little consideration or observance of cleanliness. Because Jains are in small, medium, and large businesses, they contribute to the pollution, too. Let me share a few examples.

- o The City of Pali in Rajasthan has a significant and influential population of Jains. Jains own and operate a large number of small businesses that manufacture and trade in cotton yarn and clothing. In that business, they do the color dying of yarns and cloth. The dyes that are used contain many carcinogenic and other poisonous chemicals. After the dye is spent, the colored water (still containing much poisonous materials) is openly discharged on the streets and also into the river there. About twenty-five years ago, I happened to drive through that town and saw the condition of the river. The river at that time was dry and its dry bed floor showed all the colors in the sand. First, I thought it was

some kind of wonderful natural scenery (like the Painted Desert National Monument in Arizona, USA) but quickly realized the true cause. 'These chemicals have not only polluted the river but the water table and the sub-surface water has become absolutely poisonous and unfit for human and non-human consumption. It is just full of poisonous chemicals, carcinogens, and other disease causing poisons. I was also told that the mosquitoes and frogs have completely disappeared from the area. Can anyone imagine the colossus himsa that has been caused by the actions of these traders, some of them Jains?

- o In Old Delhi, there is one area called Wazirpur Industrial area. Here, many Jains run or operate small manufacturing businesses such as metal utensil fabrication, polishing, wire drawing, and other metal processing. In the manufacturing processes, they use many chemicals, acids, and caustic sodas for chemical milling and making the metal surfaces shiny and attractive. After these chemicals are spent but still have lots of acidic and other toxic materials left), they are openly dispersed/discharged on the streets outside. About ten years ago, I happened to visit that area. The amount of open pollution, practically open sewers, pools, and small ponds of these chemicals was a site to behold. The filth, the pungent smell, and the whole scenery were just disgusting. The pity is that no one's conscience is bothered and the same show goes on every day. I really wondered how people can come here, do their business, make money, return home and sleep day after day. To me this is a horrible example of himsa. With some care, this can be avoided but who cares? I ask, is this the way to care for and worship Jambu Dweep and Bharat Kshetra, which we revere?
- o In the same area and in many of the metalworking shops, the workers do lots of grinding and metal polishing without sufficient protection and hence they inhale metallic dust, which causes TB and other lung diseases that shorten their lives. Here again the show goes on without missing a beat.

o The following particular account may not apply directly to Jains but nonetheless is quite instructive. About fifteen years ago, I had a chance to meet with the Minister of Health and Environment in the Delhi State Administration. He shared a story about how water in certain parts of Delhi has been made poisonous and unfit for human consumption for hundreds of years. In one suburb of Delhi (the Bahadar Garh area), there are a large number of small yarn factories that do coloring of the yarns using color dyes. After the color is spent, (just like in the example of the City of Pali above), these shops used to throw the spent water on the street in front of their shops thus not only causing mud, stagnant water puddles, mosquitoes, and unsafe walking conditions, but pollution, too. Seeing this, Delhi Government hired a tanker and asked all the shops to deliver the impure water to this tanker.

After collecting all this toxic water, the tanker was supposed to take this water to the Delhi Government Central water treatment facility. The shop owners had to pay a small fee to the government based on the amount of the spent water to be treated. The shop owners came up with a clever idea to avoid all this hassle. They did deliver some quantity of water to the tanker but then instructed the driver of the tanker to open the water valve/tap of the tanker a little to make it intentionally leak some water, and then drive the tanker all day long; thus, instead of the water being taken to the central treatment facility, it was then sprayed and dumped on the streets of Delhi via this leaking valve.

The government realized this and threatened the shop owners with stiffer consequences. Now, many of the same shop owners, drilled holes into the ground and put pipes inside their own shops, where they then freely discharged their spent waters this way instead of on the streets or to the central water treatment facility. As a result, the Minister told me that the underground water is now so polluted and poisoned that by his account, it will be unsafe to drink for several hundred years.

- o In November 1990, an international delegation of Jains went to Buckingham Palace in London, UK and under the leadership of the Late Dr. L.M. Singhvi, presented to H.H. Prince Philip a copy of the Jain Declaration on Nature. I was part of that delegation. This declaration clearly states Bhagwan Mahavir's proclamation, "One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them. Jain cosmology recognizes the fundamental natural phenomenon of symbiosis of mutual dependence, which forms the basis of modern day science of ecology."
- o If the memory has not faded, some of us may remember the terrible toxic sludge spill in Hungary in October 2010 and the BP Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Both of these (as with so many others that happen every day in many parts of the world) caused untold damage and destruction to all forms of life, vegetation, and the environment and none of us can escape from their after effects. In Hungary, the toxic sludge, a byproduct of aluminum manufacturing, poured from a broken containment pond and flooded many villages, bursting into homes and overturning vehicles. Even after a few days, in a mountain valley community about five miles from the source of the spill, the red sludge remained knee-deep in some places.
- o A few years ago, at one of the JAINA conventions, one Jain scholar and environmentalist came to attend and deliver a lecture at the convention. For three days, he observed and did not see any concern for environment. Instead what he saw was a lot of food being wasted along with nearly unlimited use of paper plates, napkins, and disposable glasses and utensils. During his lecture he commented that if JAINA plans to invite him again, please do so not for delivering a lecture but to wash the dishes. I hope we learn from his remarks.
- o In November 2010, at the invitation of Mr. Sunil K. Jain, IPS and Additional Director General of Police of the State

of Meghalaya (in India), I and a group of twelve additional Jains (from the US and India) went to Shillong (Meghalaya) for sightseeing and for meeting with the Jain community in that part of India. When in Shillong, all of us expressed a desire to go and visit Chirapoonjee. This is an area in Meghalaya about which we had read in geography books that it is the wettest spot (more than 500 inches of rain in a year) on earth. Mr. S.K Jain arranged for the transport and also provided each one of us with an umbrella. When we got there, it was absolutely clear, sunny, and dry and there had been no rain for more than a month. We were shocked and surprised. Very quickly we realized that the dense forest cover in that area had been cut, and as a consequence there has been significant change in the climate there. This is tragic. Destruction of the world's forest is destruction of the world's lungs.

Clearing forests may enrich those who are doing it, but over the long run it impoverishes the planet as a whole. Reducing forests reduces rainfall all over with potentially dire consequences for farmers. Trees regulate water run-off and thus help guarantee the water supply and help prevent natural disasters, like landslides and floods. Additionally, tragically, losing the forest would mean losing millions of species.

In my opinion, individual Jains, Jain leaders, and Jain sadhus should begin emphasizing concern for the environment in everything we do. This starts with cutting down on waste, conserving resources, not dumping hazardous waste in water, air, and on earth, using water and other resources wisely and recycling whenever possible. The environment and its protection is everyone's responsibility.

- o In the West, after creating so much waste, consumerism, and destruction of the environment, there are strong movements towards green living and ecology. Unfortunately, in my opinion, as the environmental laws and regulations are getting stringent here, some individuals and corporations

in the West have found avenues and places to dump their own hazardous waste and effluents in faraway places such as underdeveloped lands. This is a kind of criminal activity and neo-colonialism and should not be allowed to happen or be condoned.

I want to remind and plead with my fellow Jains that in the 21st century, there are no small manmade happenings or disasters; all are big and far-reaching and their consequences are most often global. When such things happen, geographical boundaries disappear and thus we all become part of it. It is a fact that due to pollution, many of India's cities are choking. There are days when one does not see the sun (due to smog) and the rate of many kinds of lung diseases and cancers are on the rise. India and its citizens are paying a very high price.

I sincerely hope that Jains will equate pollution of environment with acts of serious himsa and realize that all species, from one- to five-sensed, including human beings, are hurt.

I must believe that care for the environment is practice of ahimsa.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

JAINS IN MEAT BUSINESS

There was a time when we as Jains could not ever imagine or talk about this. But not anymore. When I was growing up in Delhi, for me it was extremely painful even to walk past a meat shop. Normally, I would turn my face and walk by it quickly. Now, greed and the desire to get rich quickly have motivated some Jains to go into trading and selling meat and meat-based products. Today for many, money (Lakshmi) is the only GOD that matters and that is what they toil and worship all day long for. I know a few Jains in the US who own Subway, Quizno, and so many other fast food shops that make and sell predominantly meat products. I may not be surprised if some Jains own McDonalds Franchises, too (I personally don't know any because I don't ever go there). All these fast food stores

make and sell products (right in the store) that contain animal flesh. Nearly ninety percent of their inventory is of meat of various kinds. It is a very profitable and cash sale business and more and more Jains are either expanding or going into this.

Here are some examples of business desires overcoming ahimsa.

- ◇ I personally know several Jains who own liquor stores, 7-11 stores, gas stations, and convenience stores with meat shops within. Practically most of them sell meat, fish, and egg-based products. Even to confess that such things are happening within the Jain community puts us to shame. Is this ahimsa in practice? Surely there is a major disconnect here.
- ◇ About fifteen years ago, I was at a social gathering of Indians (desis) in a town in US. When I was meeting the participants, I went to one lady and asked her name. She said, “You don’t know me but my husband who is a Jain did athaayee [eight days continuous fast] during paryushana last year.” Earlier I had come to know that this very person owned at least five to six Subway fast food stores (and I am sure he owns many more now) at that time. I have also come to know that this very person became a role model and as a result more Jains have followed suit and gone into this business.
- ◇ One of the Subway stores owned by a Jain used to donate (and probably still does) free veggie sandwiches to the Jain Pathshala kids at one of the Jain Centers here in the US. Earlier in those days, two kids I knew used to go to that pathshala. Once these kids came to know where these free sandwiches were coming from, they refused to eat those sandwiches and since then they never did. What a contrast and what a celebration of ahimsa, so much more than a mere slogan or a lifestyle! You can imagine how I felt. Even the young kids saw the difference between talk and walk.
- ◇ In one town in the US, one prominent Jain used to own an Indian grocery store. One year, he was elected to be the

president of the Jain center there. One day, during shopping at his shop, I noticed several items for sale in his shop freezer that contained beef and fish. I was stunned. That same day, I consulted another prominent member of the Jain center there and the next day we went to see the store owner and talked him out of selling such items—if not permanently at least during his term as the president of the Jain center there. He agreed and stopped such items, but only as long as he was president. Soon after, he resumed his trade.

- ◇ A few years ago, I went to see a relative of mine in the US. There, he took me to see several of his convenience stores. Right away I noticed meat, salami, hot dogs, and liquor being sold. This man (about fifty years old then) comes from a highly religious and moralistic Jain family. Needless to say, I was shocked. I have never gone to his house since then. Honestly, it still bothers me a lot.

Mahavir Sanglikar, a Jain activist in India, recently wrote a satirical blog entitled, “Jains of Butcher Land.” I reproduce that blog here. It is an eye opener. When people read his blog, many people searched on the Internet to find out where “Butcher Land” is, but no one found it as it does not exist. Many people missed the theme of his message. He used fiction to make his point. I see that there are many such Butcher Lands all around us within the Jain community and more are being created. Please read on; his message touches upon so many issues and gives compelling images of some of the things happening within the community. It appears that “sub chalta hai,” or all is okay.

“The Jains of Butcher Land,” by Mahavir Sanglikar

Very few people of the world know that there is a small island in Indian Ocean, called as Butcher Land. The most unknown thing about this land is that this tiny island is full of Jains!

I have not visited this land yet, but while finding new friends from the most unknown parts of the world through social networking sites, I got a

new friend from this land. Her name was Tina Jain. Her profile at one Social Networking Site is titled as 'Tina from Tiny Land.'

Within a few session of chatting with Tina, I got a lot of information about the Jain community of this land. I would like to share the information with you. I think that many of the readers would dislike this information, some readers would enjoy it and few would think seriously on it. Few smarter readers would immediately think that this is another humorous article of Mahavir Sanglikar.

I was surprised to know from Tina that the major business of the Jains of Butcher Land is trading of meat! They import it from India and export to African countries.

When Tina told me about it, I asked her that how can Jain community get engaged in such type of business? Her answer was quick. She said, 'We do not eat any animal product. Even eating milk product is prohibited in our community.'

We just trade. We import, and then export. We even don't touch or see the products we trade.' This was strange for me.

She told me that most of the import of meat is from Al-Kabir, Hyderabad, Asia's biggest Slaughterhouse. The reason for preferring Al-Kabir was that this company belongs to a Jain Industrialist of India. Recently he donated two Crore Rupees for construction of a new Jain temple at Buffalo, the capital city of Butcher Land.

The Jain temples of this Land are made from coins, not from bricks! The idols of Jain Gods are decorated with Silver and Golden coins, and also with currency notes of various countries, but especially with Euros and U.S. Dollars.

Last year, this Land was declared as a Jain Nation, after a revolt by extremist Jains there. The new Government of Butcher Land has banned killing of Cockroaches, Bed Bugs and Mosquitoes. The import of pesticides is prohibited. The Government has also banned farming, as agriculture is a sin according to the extremist Jains. So the people have to eat imported grains and cereals.

If a person is found eating potatoes, garlic, or onions, he is punished. Import of Sugar made from beet roots. However, the Government officials have

excluded Carrots from the list of non-eatables. Night eaters have to pay a big penalty; sometimes the offender has to lose all of his property. The restaurant owners in Butcher Land have to close their business before sunset.

Beside import-export of meat and other animal products, many Jains here are engaged in various businesses like Gutkha manufacturing and its distribution, gambling and lottery, money lending, Hawala etc. Many Butcher Land Jains work as mediators in Hawala, which is legal here. Their biggest clients are Jains from India.

There is no penalty for economic criminals, as such types of crimes are legal and cannot be called as crimes.

For Butcher Land Jains Sports, Arts, Science, Music and such things are useless. The Land does not keep any armed forces, and is fully dependent on the enemy's mercy.

The Jains of Butcher Land think that 75% of the world trade generates from their country.

There is 100% literacy and all of them are graduates. Bachelor of Commerce is the only Degree available here.

The Male-Female ratio is worst, and there are two males per one female. This is because the Jain Government has permitted to kill female children, even before they take birth. Many Jain guys have to marry girls from African countries and have to pay a big dowry to the fathers of the girls. In last few decades, the body color of Butcher Land Jains is changed! (Tina Jain looks like a beautiful black girl of Nigeria or Uganda!)

Some Indian Jain celebrities are very popular in this country. You can see a Photograph of Harshad Mehta, Ketan Parekh etc. in every office of corporate houses here.

I think that every Jain who likes to travel should visit this land.

On June 12, 2010, Sanglikar-bhai provided further elaboration of these points that he earlier made, writing:

“More About Butcher Land Jains”

My article “Jains of Butcher Land” was recently published on my blog and it was read by thousands of Jains and others world over. I got about

one hundred comments on the article, directly as comments on the blog, or by personnel emails. Some readers made phone calls regarding this article.

Many readers of the article tried to find this land on Google Maps, but failed to find it. So, some of them declared this as a fake story, while others directly asked me about the exact location of the land. There is no land called Butcher Land in Indian Ocean, which is full of Jains. The land in the story is imaginary one. The story is based on the actual things happening in Jain community of India and elsewhere. I am sad to say that most of the readers were not able to understand the true meaning of the story based on facts. They were unable to recognize the literary value of this black humor.

Well, all the business going on in the imaginary land is actually happening in India here and there. For instance, Asia's biggest slaughterhouse belongs to a Jain, and according to a report most of the biggest slaughterhouses in India are owned by Jains. So Jains do not need a separate land to do such business, they can do it easily in India.

But I was surprised to know that most of readers were against meat import-export business of Butcher Land Jains, and not against their involvement in Gutkha manufacturing and its distribution, Gambling and lottery, money lending, Hawala etc. The readers have nothing to do if Jains are killing their girl children before they take births.

Some of the statements in the story throw light on stupid tendency of Indian Jains. No one has understood this. Let me give some examples:

There is no penalty for financial criminals, as such types of crimes are legal and cannot be called as crimes. (This statement is based on the fact that many Jains are involved in financial crimes and most of the common Jains show love for Harshad Mehta, Ketan Parekh, Bharat Shah etc.)

For Butcher Land Jains Sports, Arts, Science, Music and such things are useless. The Land does not keep any armed forces, and is fully dependent on the enemy's mercy. (Fact: Making money is the sole purpose of life for many Jains, nothing to do with humanities.)

The Jains of Butcher Land think that 75% of the world trade generates from their country. (Fact: Many Jains in India think that 75% of Indian economy is in their hands. Only brainless and egoistic people can believe in such statements.)

Many Jain guys have to marry girls from African countries and have to pay a big dowry to the fathers of the girls. In last few decades, the body color of Butcher Land Jains is changed! (Tina Jain looks like a beautiful black girl of Nigeria or Uganda!) (Fact: Many Jain guys in India have to marry with tribal and other non-Jain girls by paying huge money to the agents, just because the male-female ratio is disturbed in some Jain castes.)

The Male-Female ratio is worst, and there are two males per one female (Fact: It is happening in Jain community in India.)

The Jain temples of this Land are made from coins, not from bricks! The idols of Jain Gods are decorated with Silver and Golden coins, and also with currency notes of various countries, but especially with Euros and U.S. Dollars.

If a person is found eating potatoes, Garlic or onions, he is punished. Government of Butcher Land has banned killing of Cockroaches, Bed Bugs and Mosquitoes. (Fact: Isn't it just a stupidity? But what can we expect when the religion becomes Opium?)

I am thankful to those matured and learned readers, who got the true meaning of my article and supported my views. Unfortunately they are very few in number. But I hope that Jains will awake before they get totally vanished from the world.

When the dull students do not understand lessons in the textbooks, they have to take help of Guides. This article is a guide for those who have not understood the meaning of the original article.

-Mahavitr Sanglikar <http://mahavir-sanglikar.blogspot.com/>

-Mahavir Sanglikar, Jain Friends, Post Box No. 58, Jagannath Complex, 199 Mumbai-Pune Rd. Chinchwad East, Pune 411019 Cell No. 0 962 372 5249

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

DO ECONOMIC & FINACIAL CHEATING & SWINDLING CONSTITUTE HIMSA?

Yes, these do. In fact these crimes and actions constitute himsa of much bigger intensity, proportion, and scope. Actually these

are heinous crimes. These are sankalpi himsa. In many cases, not a few but thousands and maybe millions of people are affected by their acts of swindling, cheating, deceiving, ponzi schemes, and economic violence. The societal punishment for these crimes may not be even sufficient, given the consequences of the crimes; in reality, most of the punishment just amounts to a slap on the wrist.

Jains are affluent people; they are often dealing with large sums of money and financial transactions. As a result, there is always a powerful attraction not only to succumb to small greed and deceit, but in reality to enormous greed and deceit. It only takes a brave, vigilant, and determined person to escape from this disease. Unfortunately, many times, the scope of these crimes is directly proportional to the level of affluence of the doer. What is even more shocking is that most of the time, neither the doer nor the Jain Sanghs even consider such heinous acts as himsa. When such crimes are committed, not only are a large number of people cheated and deprived of their hard earned money, but also their lifelong dreams and sources of sustenance are taken away. People become destitute and sick, marriages collapse and some people even suffer heart attacks and die. In spite of this, generally neither the doer nor the Jain sanghs consider it himsa and in fact, quite many times reward the doer amply with recognition and honors by the community. The doer buys status, prestige, glory, notoriety, fame, recognition, garlands, and even jeweled crowns within the Jain sangh (householders and sadhus) with his ill-gotten himsatmak loot and booty by giving donations and ghee bolis. In this way, the Jain sangh appear to condone these acts of himsa. What a shame!

Such kinds of crimes have always existed, but now, especially during the last three decades, their number and scope have increased in exponential proportions. Jains have much more scope and opportunities for succumbing to such temptations by way of their participation in commerce and industry. Since there is very little discussion or lectures by the sadhus and

the community against such practices, this provides enough encouragement to the would-be doers.

Below I offer a few actual examples to appeal to your conscience.

- ◇ On Dalal Street (the heart of India's security trading) a Mehta, a Parekh, and a Bhansali—all prominent Jains—have been found to be big swindlers. Who knows how many Mehtas, Parekhs, and Bhansalis are still there and still doing it every day. When these things happen, there is very little condemnation, talk or discussion about it within the Jain community. Maybe some of these big swindlers follow and imitate Bernie Madoff and ENRON (in the US) and Satyam Computers (in India) as their role models. The pity is that the likes of Bernie Madoff are spending the rest of their lives in prison in the US but very little punishment (if at all) happens to such people in India.
- ◇ During Prime Minister Narsimha Rao's time, one prominent Jain family became famous for havala kaand (illegal money transfers and laundering) and only a few Jains condemned it.
- ◇ About five years ago, one Jain, based in Dubai, was in major international news for smuggling and laundering funds to India for use by underworld crime gangs and terrorist groups. I read and heard about this on CNN News. As a result, the US FBI and Interpol were after him. Finally he was arrested. In January 2010, his daughter was getting married in India. With Indian Police escort, officials allowed him to visit his family and give away his daughter in the marriage ceremony. Soon after, I met some Jains who had attended this wedding. They all talked to me how grand the wedding was but no one said a word about how big a criminal and traitor this person was. Such is the Jain sangh today.
- ◇ Thirty plus years ago, I had come to know that one very prominent Jain in India, who was also in the business of making and selling vanaspati ghee (hydrogenated oil),

imported beef tallow (the latter being very cheap). He mixed the beef tallow with the edible oils and sold this product as pure vanaspati ghee, thus making millions of non-suspecting vegetarians non-vegetarians. I don't know if he was ever reprimanded by the Jain community.

- ◇ Many Jain owners of petrol pumps and sellers of medicines (chemist shops) in India frequently indulge in selling adulterated and spurious products and also engage in not dispensing the proper quantity, weight, or volume.
- ◇ I have read and been told that a few Jain temples in India might have been built now and in the past with loot and ill gotten wealth. I guess money has no color and all is fair when it comes to accepting donations.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

CAPITALISM, ECONOMIC MELTDOWNS, SWINDLING, AND MANIPULATION ARE THE BOON OF THE WEST IN THE 21ST CENTURY

I have lived in the West for the last forty-Eight plus years and for a long time, I thought that the West had very high moralistic and ethical values, but recently I have come to the conclusion that no national, ethnic, or religious group has a monopoly on ethics. There are bad apples everywhere. The recent economic meltdowns and examples of swindling, cheating, sky-high greed, and bonuses, and the twisting and distorting of truth by the so-called rich and famous in the West, and particularly in the US, leads me to believe that people are same everywhere and there is no less corruption (in fact it is many times more) in the USA than in any country of the world.

In India, the corruption is practically at every level of society but it is modest whereas in the US it is of monumental proportion and is done by the rich and super rich, the famous, powerful, educated and religious (but not moral) people. Examples include: ENRON, Bernie Madoff, Sanford, Bankers, Wall Street tycoons and bandits, insurance company

executives, drug companies, security and investment traders, auditors, accountants, lawyers, advertising executives, MBAs (they have recently acquired the nickname of “master of the universe” rather than “master of business administration”), spin doctors and loan sharks scam artists. All have had and are still having a field day in looting and cheating the poor, ethical, and unsuspecting ordinary folks. One only has to pay attention to some of the news items in the media to get just a glimpse of the con games these sophisticated thieves play every day. Their modus operandi are extremely sophisticated.

In the United States, many of the professional schools, such as schools of business, law, accounting, and advertising turn out graduates (some and not all) with unlimited and sky-high greed and unethical behaviors. The only thing they consider is how to distort, warp, discolor, or hide truth, connive, and cheat people (investors and customers) and line their pockets with unlimited wealth. I honestly feel that in the US, if anyone ever creates a team consisting of MBAs, accountants, lawyers, and advertisers, one would have created the biggest monster imaginable. I blame part of this malaise rests with some of the professional schools for turning out such lousy products that do so much damage to the society.

Jains in India run many Business Schools to train MBAs and accountants. I have visited a few of them but in spite of my many pleas, they don't offer courses in Business Ethics. What a pity for we Jains and keepers of ahimsa!

The truth is that if a bank robber makes off with millions of dollars, he can expect the full force of the law. So why should big corporations and swindlers be able to evade justice if caught engaging in corruption or other economic crimes?

The erosion of trust in business in North America has been little short of catastrophic in recent years. A professor recently analyzed some of the world's big corporations and argued that they possess all of the following attributes: grandiosity, manipulativeness, and the inability to feel remorse. They

present themselves in ways that are appealing but deceptive. In a news report appearing in Financial Times dated December 15, 2010, India's Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh accused Indian business leaders of having an "ethical deficit."

I read in the Waterloo, Iowa Courier dated July 25th, 2011, an article noting that the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act by US Congress in 1999 was the catalyst and continuing fuel that scorched the US economy. Wall Street's naked greed, its perverted honesty, unspeakable hubris, and contemptuous management vacuumed trillions of dollars from the pockets of 300 million Americans. Wall Street's new billionaire and trillionaire banksters should be the candidates for federal prison, not little Martha Stewart who was jailed in 2004 for making \$200,000 on inside information. Wall Street has no more conscience than a fox in a poultry farm. But that's the immutable nature of these people.

In an April 2010 article in Rolling Stone Magazine, Matt Taibbi compared Goldman Sachs to a "great vampire squid, wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells of money," an apt description that also applies to Bank of America, JP Morgan, and Citigroup. Allowing these Wall Street banks to continue feeding their greed is destroying our democracies, our economies, our retirement plans and our freedoms. I think that when greed becomes the sole driving force, then all boundaries of geography, religions, caste, culture, and creed disappear. I hope my Jain community remains vigilant to avoid succumbing to the greed.

Corruption is the greatest act of himsa.

A VISIT WITH WARREN BUFFETT, THE WORLD'S SECOND RICHEST MAN

During the week of November 29, 2010, a class of students from a business school in Houston, Texas, went to see Mr. Warren Buffett (the world's second richest man) in Omaha,

Nebraska. The class and some faculty spent a full day with Mr. Buffett and asked him about his business philosophy. One student, Aimee Langlins, said she was impressed with Buffett's admonishment to invest in people, not in businesses. Mr. Buffett said, "I think that entrepreneurs should always remember that focusing on the best interest of the people they affect every day, whether that be their employees, shareholders or the community, will drive profits. What they decide to do with those profits speaks to their character."

With a net worth estimated at \$47 billion (may be more), Buffett repeated his recent mantra to students- that people with more than \$1 billion in net worth should donate at least half of their money to charity. When people hear he is the wealthiest person in the world, they may begin to stereotype. But when you meet him, you realize he is very humble and as far away from materialism as you can get. It sets an example for anyone, whether they are entrepreneurs or not.

What a remarkable human being Mr. Buffett is!

I can go on and on describing the havoc greed can create. My purpose of writing all of this is that we Jains have ethics, morals, aprigraha, ahimsa, absolute truth, and not stealing as foundational morals. They are not slogans. We need to stick to these time-tested principles. My brothers and sisters, these Jain principles are the saviors of the human race.

Now you decide, is this behavior consistent with ahimsa?

CONCLUSION

Cheating, adulteration, greed, and corruption in any business or human endeavor are prime sources of himsa and one must be vigilant to avoid becoming a practitioner of such unethical behavior.

SOME INSPIRATIONAL EXAMPLES, STORIES AND CASE HISTORIES

All is not so bad and ugly within the Jain community. There always have been, and still remain, many excellent shravaks and shravikas (lay men and women) who are role models and who observe and strive to practice ahimsa in their day to day lives.

From my limited observations, I present below a sampling of such people. I am sure there are thousands such exemplary people in each community. It would also be appreciated if readers will provide more examples to be included in future editions of this book.

MAHATMA GANDHI, WHOSE WHOLE LIFE WAS A BOOK ON AHIMSA

The terms “ahimsa” and “Mahatma Gandhi” have become synonymous world over. It was Gandhi who inspired many and made “ahimsa” a household word throughout the world. Gandhi-ji was inspired and influenced by the teachings and philosophy of Jainism and his contacts with many Jains, beginning with childhood and throughout his life. One Jain merchant, Srimad Rajchandra, known as Raichand-bhai became his spiritual mentor.

It can be easily said that Jain contacts and Gandhi's stay in South Africa (where he developed and practiced the concepts and philosophy of practical ahimsa) made a simple Mohan (Gandhi) a Mahatma Gandhi. The life story of Mahatma Gandhi is full of hundreds of daily, real life examples in the practice of ahimsa. Gandhi practiced ahimsa not only regarding food (the items that he would eat or not eat) but also towards all, one- to five-sensed humans and non-human species.

He was not just satisfied being a vegetarian, he extended that boundary of radical peace to all living creatures and devoted a significant part of his life towards applying ahimsa. He writes, "I have absolutely forgotten to hate anyone based on any differentiation, of caste, color, gender, religion, age, position, wealth or station in life." With such an attitude, how can such a person say that avoiding himsa is not possible?

Yes, Jainism made a non-Jain into a Gandhi, but hardly any Jain has ever become a Gandhi. During the last 500-1000 year history of India, I do not recall any Jain becoming a Gandhi of that stature. Mahatma Gandhi has been gone for more than sixty-six years; even during this period, I have not seen or known any Gandhi-like Jain in the Jain community. It is a pity and a matter of introspection.

In recent times, Mahatma Gandhi has become the greatest symbol of non-violence. He is a role model of ahimsa to millions of people and has inspired world leaders and Nobel Laureates who, with their vision, unwavering faith in ahimsa, and sacrifices brought about great societal changes. Gandhi's ahimsa message and practice continue to reverberate. A few notable examples include the abolition of apartheid in South Africa and the Civil Rights movements in the US.

Thousands of stories from the life of Mahatma Gandhi inspire today and will keep on influencing people for a long time. Let me quote below just a few of his remarks and sayings, including:

“There are many causes that I am prepared to die for but no cause that I am prepared to kill for;”

“An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind;”

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated;” and

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA (or RAICHAND) & CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF OTHERS IN HIS DIAMOND BUSINESS

As mentioned earlier, Shrimad Rajchandra was a mentor, a kind of spiritual guru, and a confidante to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi-ji and Rajchandra had many long correspondences on matters of spirituality.

Rajchandra and his family were diamond traders. Once, Rajchandra entered into a major contract for a future time (within 6 months) with another diamond dealer for an agreed upon price for delivery of the diamonds at a future date. The seller was betting that during the upcoming six months, the price of diamonds would go down; he intended to buy first at the lower price, then make the delivery and thus would make a good profit.

Similarly, Rajchandra also bet that the price would go up in next six months, and he—by paying today’s low price, would make good money down the road. The seller was betting on the price going down and Rajchandra on going up in six months. This is called future commodity trading.

Both Rajchandra and the seller prepared a document (an IOU) for this contract. During the next six months, Rajchandra’s predictions came true and the price of diamonds shot up significantly. On the agreed upon date of delivery, Rajchandra went to the shop of the seller and asked for the delivery of the diamonds. Rajchandra knew very well in his heart that if the seller made the delivery, he (the seller) would incur a

very substantial loss and Rajchandra would make a very good profit. The seller expressed his inability to make the delivery at that time and asked an extension of another one week.

Realizing this, Rajchandra pulled out the contract, tore it into many pieces and said to the seller, “brother, I know very well what is happening in the market. If you make this delivery, you will be completely ruined due to this loss and I will make some profit. For me, this is himsa where you get ruined and I become richer. I do not do this kind of business. So the contract is nullified,” and left his shop. This is astounding. When Shrimad Rajchandra put himself into the shoes of the seller, and felt his pain and suffering, this is ahimsa.

LALA ROOP LAL JAIN and HIS AHIMSA IN PRACTICE - CONCERN FOR THE WEAK

In early 1900s, Lala Roop Lal Jain was a prominent and respected member of the Jain community in Punjab. He was a magistrate in the princely state of Faridkot during the British colonial days. In those days, being a magistrate was considered to be very respectable and prestigious position. Roop Lal Ji was an active, visionary, and ahimsak sharavak. He practiced the Jain way of life in everything he did.

In the 1920s and 1930s, he was also instrumental in the establishment and building of the Jinendra Jain Gurukul at Panchkula. Today, the City of Panchkula is a suburb of the City of Chandigarh and also a second capital city of the State of Haryana. I personally met Lala Roop Lal ji in the early 1960s when he used to live at the Jinendra Jain Gurukul.

The following story was told to me by Lala Roop Lal Ji's own eldest son, Des Raj Jain himself. “When Des Raj was born in the town of Faridkot (in Punjab), in the same town in another Jain family, a girl was also born a few months later. As was the custom in those days, the girl's father came to the boy's father (Lala Roop Lal ji) and said that he would like to have his daughter engaged in a matrimonial relation with

Des Raj. Mind you, both the girl and the boy were infants. In those days, the custom of arranged marriages was extremely prevalent. Only a formal commitment (verbal agreement) to a matrimonial commitment was all that was needed. The actual marriage would take place when the boy and the girl reached puberty. Now, Lala Roop Lal Ji agreed to this offer and gave his word that his infant son Des Raj would now be engaged to this infant girl. The whole Jain community came to know of this news.

In the course of time, after a few years, the girl's father died suddenly, leaving behind a wife and four very young children. In those days, there were no life insurance, social security, pensions, or any such thing. The father was the only breadwinner and now he was no more. Most of the families only had modest assets as they were just middle or lower middle class. Due to economic necessities, the girl's mother, to feed her family, started working in Jain and non-Jain homes as a domestic servant doing dishes, laundry, cleaning floors, cooking food, and other chores. Such kind of work was considered very demeaning and menial in the society, as only the people from very low castes would do such things, but not usually Jains. The entire Jain community knew about the mother's work.

When the time for the children's marriage came nearer, some prominent members of the local Jain community came to persuade Lala Roop Lal ji to decline, undo and nullify his earlier commitment and not to allow the marriage between his son and the girl take place. The reason given was that the girl's family was now destitute and so now, the matrimonial relationship was not up to par with the status of Roop Lal Ji.

On hearing this, Roop Lal Ji was really pained. He reminded this group that they knew very well what economic hardship the girl's family was going through, and what had the Jain community done to alleviate their hardship? He was further pained that the same community who had done absolutely nothing for the affected family in their hour of need, has

now come to tell him that not only should the family should continue starving, but in addition, the daughter should not be able to get married as well. He posed the question: Is this what you think Ahimsa is and should be? Now more than ever was there reason to have the marriage take place as promised, and Roop Lal Ji declared that it would be so. Des Raj did marry the same girl, as originally promised, years earlier.

What a great lesson in ahimsa Lala Roop Lal Ji presented to the Jain community, and not as a sermon but by practical application. We need more of such sharavaks today.

Throughout his life, Lala Roop Lal Ji donated a significant portion (more than sixty percent) of his monthly paycheck for the welfare causes of the community, for the sick, and for the downtrodden.

LOCAL JAIN REFUSES TO PRINT HIMSA MATERIAL

Mr. Suketu Kapadia is an unassuming, gentle, honest man, and a practicing shravak in Houston, Texas. Along with his family, he runs a good-size printing business in Houston. They all are always mindful about the practice of ahimsa, not only at home but also in their business. He is often faced with big printing orders where he is required to print books, magazines, and advertising materials that promote himsa and himsak products such as leather, non-vegetarian food restaurants, guns, philosophies and stories of himsa, hatred, and warfare.

From the very beginning, Suketu Kapadia decided that he would not accept such contracts and business and even today he refuses to knowingly print such materials. I talk to Suketu-bhai quite often and every day he becomes more convinced of his stand, even in times when business and general economic conditions may not be that good. Thank you, Suketu-bhai for this restraint and care in your business. I wish there were many more Suketus around me.

CANADIAN WOMAN REFUSES ANIMAL- INGREDIENT AND TESTED MEDICINES

About twenty years ago, one Canadian lady (who was practicing Jain ahimsa) went to New Delhi where she was to get a prestigious award from a Jain group. Her host in New Delhi was a Jain family. The night she reached India, this lady developed severe chest pain and the host family immediately rushed her to a very famous heart hospital in New Delhi. There, she told the attending cardiologist (who also happened to be a Jain) that no matter how serious her condition might be—even if it was a life and death situation—she would not want the cardiologist to administer any animal-based medicines.

The cardiologist was absolutely stunned and remarked that over the years, he had attended on many Jains but she was the first one to make such a request. He was so impressed that he took her to Jaipur where he introduced her to his parents and also organized a community celebration for her. You see, there are people for whom ahimsa finds an important place in their lives.

LESSONS FROM MY GRAND-DAUGHTERS

Every grandparent, and we are not exceptions, wants to brag about their grandchildren. The following incidents are presented here not as a sign of my ego. These are real incidents from which I learn, and hope to offer as chances for reflection.

We have two granddaughters in Houston, Texas, where we live. Their names are Priyanka (currently aged eighteen) and Divya (currently aged sixteen). From their births, they have been taught about ahimsa as a natural part of their upbringing.

About eleven years ago (when they were only seven and five), my wife and I went to St. Petersburg, Russia and there we bought about a dozen very simple, wooden, mechanical toys for the girls. After our return, we gave all of the toys to our

granddaughters. They both took all except one; this one toy they each dropped on the floor and refused to accept it.

I was extremely puzzled. All of the toys were varied; this particular toy had a daddy bear in the front and a baby bear holding a bat in the rear. The toy had a cotton string and when that string was pulled, the baby bear would strike the daddy bear on his back with the bat.

When I asked the girls why they are not accepting this toy, each girl said, “Grandpa, don’t you see there is himsa here?” I was really stunned and said “Wow. Your grandfather was not that smart. Who knows —some day you may become Mahavir.”

The same year, Christmas came and both the girls got lots of gifts from us, from their parents, and also from their maternal grandparents. One of the gifts was a game of darts, a board with arrows. Just to try this new gift, Divya put the dartboard on the wall, grabbed a few of the arrows and prepared to shoot the arrows to strike the so-called bull’s eye (a circle in the center of the dartboard).

Divya took one arrow in her hand and aimed to shoot/throw the arrow to strike the bull’s eye point. At that very moment, in order to encourage Divya, her maternal grandpa said to her, “Divya, go and hit the bull’s eye.”

Now, at this very moment, Divya has the arrow in her hand and is ready to shoot. Suddenly her hand stops and she says, “Why should I hit the bull’s eye? This is himsa.” Then, she said, “Instead of hitting the bull’s eye, can I call it ‘hitting the center point?’” You cannot imagine how elated I felt. She was practicing verbal ahimsa.

A few months later, when Divya was sick with a low-grade fever, she asked me “Grandpa, let us play cards.” I agreed. Divya chose a game meant for small children. This game was called “Go Fish.” Divya looked at me with surprise and said, “I don’t want to go and fish. I want to call it ‘go Schlitterbahn’ [the name of an amusement park in Texas.]”

These are just a few examples of how children if properly trained in a foundation of ahimsa, they can become our own teachers in areas in which we hardly ever paid any attention. This certainly was the case with me. Hearing and watching these two kids gave me joy. If at such a young age, they think about ahimsa so minutely and at such a micro-level, these kids when they grow up will not waver. Unfortunately, daily I see many grown up men and women raised in strict orthodox Jain families but without any logical grounding in ahimsa. As a result, they get blown away from ahimsa at the very first temptation or situation. What we need in the Jain community is the strong and logical teaching of ahimsa at every level.

REFUSAL TO RIDE AN ELEPHANT

In the same line of grounding in ahimsa, my own daughter, on a visit to Jaipur from the US (where she has lived for the last forty-eight years), refused to take a joyride on an elephant up to the Amer Palace because of the torture and cruelty that is generally meted out by mahouts to the elephant.

CONCERN FOR CRUELTY TO THE HORSE

We have been conducting an International Summer School for Jain Academic Studies (ISSJS) since 2005. ISSJS is meant for full time faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students from any foreign university. The participants go to India during summer for four to eight weeks for experiential based study of Jainism.

In the very first session of the International School for Jain Studies, in 2005, a graduate student named Sarah Hadmack, from the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, attended this school. One week of the ISSJS was conducted at the campus of the Jain Vishwa Bharati University (JVB) in Ladnun, Rajasthan. The JVB campus is located on the outskirts of the City of Ladnun.

One day in the evening, ISSJS organized a field trip to a very old and historical Jain temple, which was dug out of the ground several hundred years ago. This temple is located in the heart

of the City of Ladnun. A mini bus took them to this temple. While the group was at the temple, suddenly there was a heavy cloudburst which created lots of deep water everywhere and the city lost electricity too. Darkness fell all around.

Due to too much deep water on the road, it was not possible to bring them back to JVB campus by mini bus for fear of the bus stalling in deep water. Therefore, the ISSJS organizers arranged for a few horse drawn tongas (carriages) to bring the group home (to JVB campus).

Sarah Hadmack was in one of the carriages. For the carriage to move through this deep puddle of water, the driver of the carriage was constantly torturing the horse with a sharp nail forced into its skin; the driver was using pain to force the horse and carriage move forward. Sarah saw all this and realized the himsa to this poor creature. Immediately, she got down from the carriage, in deep water all around her, and refused to go further in that tonga. She walked all the way to JVB on foot, not caring how much she herself suffered. Even to many Jains present, this was an eye opening experience; they had become generally indifferent to such treatment to animals. Sarah wrote of this account in her daily blog to her mother. Bravo, Sarah. This is compassion.

CONCERN FOR AHIMSA IN DELIVERING JUSTICE

Several years ago, I was a guest in Bhopal, India at the house of Mr. Suresh Jain IAS, a very prominent activist and leader of the Jain community not only in Bhopal, but in the whole of India. His wife; Mrs.Vimla Jain was at that time a Session Judge (later she became a Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court). During our discussions, I observed to Mrs. Jain that during her judicial duties, she must have awarded death sentences several times to convicted criminals and wondered how she as a Jain handles such decisions. I asked her what resultant thoughts and emotions she experienced while writing such decisions with her own hands.

She openly and plainly told me that the very first time she awarded the death sentence, her hands (while writing the sentence) trembled and she could not sleep for several months. She questioned how she—herself a mother who had changed the diapers of her own children—now with the same hands was writing a death sentence for another human being. She said to me that she had researched the case very thoroughly, read and re-read it at least ten times to make sure that the accused had not been set up and framed by police, by witnesses, and or by others with vested interests. When she was convinced in her own mind that a very heinous crime had been committed, and the accused deserved at least that much or maybe even a more severe sentence, only then did she write that judgment. She has observed the same care and diligence with the underlying consideration of principles of ahimsa in her role as a senior judge. Even though there is some himsa involved here, the action is taken without any malice and in discharging the duties of the State. This is Raajkeeya Himsa.

MINIMIZING HIMSA IN PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

As I mentioned earlier, Mrs. Jain's husband, Mr. Suresh Jain, was a senior level government administrator (IAS) and had been in charge many times to maintain law and order in his area of jurisdiction. I asked him to what level and how he observes ahimsa in the discharge of his duties of his profession. He told me "Sulekh-ji, it has happened to me several times that when the mob is protesting against something, they became unruly all of a sudden and start throwing stones on the police and resort to looting and arson. At that time it is the first and utmost duty of the administrator to restore law and order." To do that, sometimes, he and his police force had to resort to tear gas, lathi (sticks) charge, beating, and perhaps actual firing to disperse the mob.

In such situations, first he gave enough warning to the mob to disperse. Then, he fully instructed his police force not to

use too much or unnecessary force. They must observe due restraints, refrain from showing revenge, and avoid making a show of their firing and hitting power. When firing had to be ordered, he always first asked his policemen to fire mostly into the air instead of into the crowd. He instructs them to have only the minimum casualties.

Even in several such trying circumstances, he has always kept the principles of ahimsa as his guide. If he and his men would have been even a bit careless, they could easily end up with many casualties. I wish that more senior administrators would follow his example of restraint and care for non-violence.

AHIMSA GUIDES A JAIN PARLIAMENTARIAN

Once one senior Jain member of the Indian Parliament told me that as a Jain, guided by ahimsa, she is always careful and when voting on resolutions involving war and government promotion of meat, mostly votes against these and other himsak industries.

Similarly, after the State assembly elections in the State of Karnataka in April 2013, one Mr. Dhananjai Kumar Jain was appointed a Minister of the State of Karnataka by the State Chief Minister, Mr. Jain was assigned the Ministry of Fisheries and Husbandry. On ahimsa and Jain principles, he refused the assignment.

PRIORITY OF CARE FOR HORSES

During the Desert Storm War (in the early 1990s), when US forces invaded Kuwait to drive out invader Sadaam Hussein of Iraq, the Iraqi army retreated and set many buildings in Kuwait on fire. By that time, most of the Kuwaitis had already fled, leaving many of their horses tied in their stables. Some of the stables there were on fire too. At that moment, one television reporter from Boston, while filming this retreat and the inferno all around, saw the plight of the horses in the stables. There was no one to save the lives of these poor

creatures. Immediately, with a feeling of compassion, he threw away his camera, removed his clothes and jumped into the fire. At the risk of his own personal safety he was able to save the lives of many horses. I wonder, how many Jains would do this, or would they just run away saying, “Oh, that is their karmas and let them deal with it. Why should I interfere?” I call this cowardice. Compassion, karuna, and removing the suffering of others are the essential and primary duties of any human being.

For many years, I lived in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio. In the downtown, there are quite a few horse drawn buggies for the enjoyment of the tourists. Considering the humane aspect and to avoid cruelty to the animals—horses in this case—the city council there passed an ordinance that when the outside air temperature exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit (about 38 degrees Celcius), to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion, the horses will not be used. What a fine example for Jains to follow and to replicate in many Indian and other cities.

ONE CITY IN BELGIUM GOES VEGETARIAN

Recently the city of Ghent in Belgium unanimously decided to go vegetarian, to save the environment and to feed hungry people. To achieve this, the city council started a large citywide campaign to educate the public, using billboards, television, and other media. In my opinion, this city of Ghent may be the only vegetarian city in the world (recently the City of Palitana in Gujarat is following suit). Can we find similar examples in India or anywhere else?

HONESTY IN BUSINESS PAYS DIVIDENDS

About fifteen years ago I went to the city of Antwerp in Belgium. Antwerp has been a world center of wholesale trade in diamonds for several hundreds of years. The trade there is mostly in the hands of Jewish traders but now, during the last fifty years, Jains from India also control about twenty-five percent of the trade there. Thus Jains and Jews not only trade with each other but also with other traders at large.

Many transactions are worth millions of dollars and involve trust and absolute faith with those with whom one is trading. Most of the time, deals are done verbally and very little is in writing. There, one prominent Jain diamond dealer told me that Jains enjoy a high level of trust and acceptance there due to their honesty. I was very delighted to hear this. I have been told many times that Jains in India used to be famous and noted for that kind of trust, truthfulness, and honesty in trade and also in the courts of India. I wonder, do we still have that reputation?

Additionally, many young couples in the West are choosing conflict-free diamonds or human-made diamonds to celebrate their love. Increasingly, it is a commonly held belief that diamond mining is brutal and inhumane, and all diamond trade is tainted by this. The US blockbuster film, *Blood Diamond*, did a lot to raise awareness of this.

Most young women now do not want a diamond engagement ring unless it's certified to have come from Canada, which certifies their diamonds with "green" ecologically friendly and human rights friendly practices. Or, couples will choose moissanite or another human-made stone to avoid child labor or slavery tainting their symbol of love and commitment.

NOTED JAIN CREATES & SELLS CRUELTY-FREE SOAP

When I was in my teens, I heard that one Jain in Delhi was a manufacturer of washing soap for clothes. He never used any animal based ingredients in his soap, whereas everyone else did. His soaps were cruelty free. For sale and distribution, he owned a small retail shop in a market in Delhi. He used to open his shop around 11.00am and close by 3.00pm. Even though his soap was more expensive than others, there used to be a big line of customers waiting to buy his soap. He was known for honesty, quality, full weight, and cruelty free product.

CELEBRATING WITH COMPASSION

In 2005, I happened to visit India only a few days after the Tsunami, which had caused a huge amount of destruction and loss of lives in the southern coastal parts of India. Everywhere, in the towns and villages of India, people were volunteering and collecting funds to help the Tsunami victims. I heard the following story at that time; it moved me immensely.

In a suburb of New Delhi, one wealthy Jain businessman had invited nearly 1000 of his friends to a posh five star hotel to celebrate his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary with his wife. This celebration had been planned and arranged months in advance of the Tsunami. The host had made elaborate arrangements for decorations, food, and entertainment. Suddenly the Tsunami came. All the guests arrived as per the invitation but the sense of pomp and show was missing.

During the party, the host picked up the microphone, welcomed all his guests, and announced that all his guests would still be fed, but not the full thirty course dinner that he had planned. Instead, the entire resultant savings would go straight away to Tsunami victims. Every one burst into joyful applause and congratulated the couple even more heartily for this example in compassion. In fact, many people came forward and donated their own money to the cause in addition. This practical example was enough and no preaching was needed.

Similarly, I recently came to know that some Jain youths in the city of Indore, in India, have started celebrating birthdays of their young sons and daughters not by throwing extravagant parties, but by actually taking the children to poor schools, hospitals, and orphanages, where they distribute food, clothing, shoes, and medicine. I only hope that such examples spread throughout the country and abroad in the Jain community.

AHIMSA IN WORD & DEED

Prof. Gary Francione, who was introduced earlier, was invited a few years ago to give a talk on Jainism and ahimsa at a

Catholic church in Northern Ireland. The host offered him first class air travel, an honorarium, plus all hospitality to him in Northern Ireland. Francione reflected on this invitation and on the resultant himsa involved in his air travel. Instead, he called the church authorities, told them about the himsa, and suggested that they present his live talk via a web broadcast and asked them to donate all the budgeted funds for his talk to the charities of their choice. Believe me, the hosts not only were impressed but also received a lesson in practical Jainism and ahimsa. In addition, Francione donates all the royalties—which are quite substantial from several of his books—to vegan and humanitarian causes.

NEMI & RAJUL STILL INSPIRE MANY

I don't know of any Jain who is not familiar with the 22nd Tirthankar Nemi Nath and his bride Rajul. As the story goes, the marriage procession of Neminath is proceeding with all royal pomp and show towards the palace of Rujul.

Rajul too is watching the movement of the wedding party from the windows of her apartments. Both Neminath and Rajul are excited. Suddenly, Neminath notices lots of animals in cages by the side of the road where his marriage procession was passing. He asks his aides why these animals are there, and what purpose they serve. The aides reply that they are for the dinner of all the marriage participants. Hearing this, Neminath-ji is shocked and starts feeling the pain and suffering and finally, feels compassion for their lives. He could not bear it. How can he get married when so many of these poor and helpless creatures will become part of the dinner soon?

Right there and then, with the feeling of their pain, Neminath-ji stops the marriage procession, removes all his clothing, renounces the world, and becomes a Jain monk. Seeing this and realizing that Neminath-ji has become a monk, Rajul decides to do the same and becomes a Jain nun.

This is not only compassion but compassion with personal sacrifice. Gary Francione told me that he always keeps a

pratima (idol) of Neminath-ji on his office desk in front of him to constantly remind him that sometimes practice of ahimsa demands personal sacrifices, too.

PEOPLE FIRST, PROFIT LATER

Many Jains know about a great and wealthy Jain shravak named Bhama Shah. He lived during the time of Maharana Pratap and Emperor Akbar (about 450 years ago). During this period, there was a large famine in the state of Rajasthan. There was absolute scarcity of food and water everywhere. People were dying due to starvation. Bhama Shah, being a trader, had extensive warehouses full of wheat and other food items. He practically controlled the prices and availability of food items. But for him, this was not the time to take advantage of people and make lots of money. He felt compassion for their suffering. Immediately he opened his warehouses for feeding the people. He did all this because of compassion and care. Again, this was ahimsa in practice.

FORGOT HOW TO HATE

Recently, in July 2010, by chance, I happened to meet with a remarkable person —Dr. Ron Potter, an audiologist. He is a Lutheran Christian and lives in the city of Waterloo, Iowa. I met Ron several times and spent many hours with him in discussion and in getting to know each other better. The more I came to know of him, the more I realized that he is truly a remarkable man, a true gentleman, and caring, honest, humble, compassionate, simple, truthful, and straightforward. One day he told me that during the last thirty plus years, he has never hated anyone based on any differences of caste, creed, religion, position, power, wealth, or nationality. He does meditation every day, asks for forgiveness, and if he hurts anyone, immediately he tries to contact that person and ask for forgiveness. Honestly, I believe all this what he told me. In my opinion, he lives by ahimsa all the time. He is not yet a complete vegetarian, but in that too he is trying

to become one. You can see, the practice of ahimsa has no boundaries.

RESOLVING GREIVANCES WITH AHIMSA

About eight years ago, the Bureau of US Immigration had posted on its website the last date to apply for B-1 Visa, to be August 31st of that year. Many Indian professionals who were in the US on temporary work visas were planning to apply before that last date. All of a sudden, these professionals noticed on the Bureau's website that the director of that organization moved the date for application up by two months—now June 30th—and as a result many applicants got caught off guard. They were in a desperate situation as to what to do, because the last date had already passed.

Some applicants wrote emails to the Director of the Bureau to reconsider her decision, but she would not budge. Now all of these applicants, instead of shouting slogans outside her office, sending nasty emails, and all such things, decided on a very novel and Gandhian idea for conflict resolution. They all decided, via email, that each and every one of them should send —on one given day —a floral bouquet via FTD to the office of this Director of Immigration.

The very next morning, the FTD vans started pulling up in front of the Directorate and started unloading and delivering floral bouquet after bouquet. Before the day was over, nearly 30,000 bouquets were delivered to the office of the Director. This became a big scene as the hundreds of FTD vans were coming and going all day long and delivering flower bouquets.

Very soon, there was no room for all of flowers. The national news media picked up this sweet and amusing story and broadcasted it on television all day long. The Director very quickly realized her mistake, relented, and changed the application date again to August 31st. Since there was no room to house all these bouquets, the Director decided to donate all of them to the Walter Reed Army Hospital where wounded

soldiers from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were being treated. They too were very pleased with the flowers.

All was resolved very amicably and peacefully, all the applicants got lots of free and positive publicity, soldiers got flowers and everyone was a winner. One can see here that there are always many non-violent ways of resolving conflicts. I wish we would pay more attention to such means and avoid unnecessary and protracted fights.

JAIN STOCK BROKERS CALL FOR A NON-VIOLENT STOCK INDEX

September 8, 2014: A small but influential community of Jain securities traders is calling for a new stock index that matches their beliefs in non-violence and the sanctity of life. Jainism preaches respect for all living creatures. While Jains account for just one half of one percent of India's massive population of 1.2 billion people, they make up a disproportionately high percentage of India's stock traders, partly because their beliefs make it difficult to work on other professions.

Now that small investors are pouring money into Indian stocks, propelling the Sensex to new highs, some of the leaders of the Jain stock-trading community want to make their mark by creating an index that would make it easier for observant Jains to invest. The index would be made up exclusively of companies that don't depend on violence to make money, its backers say. The exact components of any potential Jain index would have to be debated, but brokers say it won't include companies that deal with meat, leather, pesticides or weapons. In the words of Motilal Oswal, Chairman of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. a Mumbai-based brokerage firm, "I think it's a good idea and there will be a niche audience for this kind of product. Commenting on this D. R. Mehta, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India "I will support the idea of such an index because it will make Jains more comfortable with investing".

While it is still unclear which shares should be included and which avoided, brokers said any Jain index would likely exclude stocks such as shoe maker Bata India Ltd., poultry company Venky's (India) Ltd., Insecticides (India) Ltd. and even Jubilant Food Works Ltd., which operates the Domino's Pizza chain in India. Jainism also bans smoking and drinking of alcohol so ITC Ltd., India's biggest cigarette maker, and United Spirits Ltd., the country's largest spirits producer, would also be out. Among the industries that may be allowed in the index are telecommunications, outsourcing, banking, traders said. That would mean phone companies such as Bharti Airtel Ltd., banks such as State Bank of India and maybe software companies including Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. could be part of the index. If launched, it will not be the first faith-based index. Islamic Countries do have Shariah indexes that are compliant with some Islamic beliefs. Islamic law doesn't permit Muslims to invest in companies that profit from charging interest or the sale of goods that are deemed sinful like alcohol and tobacco.

GOOD NEWS: Agriculture Technology Could Change How the World Eats

From Las Vegas Sun, Sunday, December 28, 2014

Investors and entrepreneurs behind some of the world's newest industries have started to put their money and tech talents into farming—the world's oldest industry—with an audacious agenda: to make sure there is enough food for the 10 billion people expected to inhabit the planet by 2100, do it without destroying the world and make a pretty penny along the way.

Silicon Valley is pushing its way into every stage of the food-growing process, from tech tycoons buying the farmland to startups selling robots that work the fields to hackathons dedicated to building the next farming app.

Dozens of companies are creating technology to make farmland more productive and farming more efficient, using robots to trim lettuce or software to calculate grass production for cattle grazing. **Others are tapping technology to find substitutes for meat, cheese and eggs, so less land is used to raise livestock , fewer greenhouse gas-spewing trucks are used to transport them, and fewer animals are subject to inhumane slaughter.** Venture capitalists have propped up startups such as Hampton Creek, which sells mayonnaise and cookies that use plant products instead of eggs, and Impossible Foods, a Redwood City company making hamburgers and cheese without meat and dairy.

DOMESTIC TENSION RESOLVED WITH SMILES

The following appears to be a real happening, which was told to me by a friend. One day a young couple started arguing and fighting over something. This is nothing new between husbands and wives. During the argument, the wife got extremely angry and she threw her mobile phone at her husband. The husband grabbed the incoming phone and put it in his pocket. The wife carefully watched the whole scene. The husband remained very calm and quiet without any reaction. The wife was expecting some strong reaction from her husband but it did not happen.

After a few minutes, the wife cooled down and asked her husband, “What kind of man are you? I hit you with a cell phone, but there was no reaction.” To this, the husband replied “Madam, I thought the incoming call are free.” Hearing this, they both had a big laugh, all was forgotten, and things returned to normal.

What a great example of using non-violent language to resolve conflicts.

MOTHERLY, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

A PICTURE WORTH 1,000, may be 10,000 WORDS



This picture by *Hindustan Times* lensman Himanshu Vyas (right) has won the IFRA Gold Award for News Photography, General News. Vyas had heard about an orphan fawn being looked after by a Bishnoi woman near his hometown Jodhpur. At the mud dwelling, he noticed the fawn playing with her children. "When hungry, the woman breastfed the fawn and her daughter simultaneously. Wildlife activism is publicised around the world. But this connect between man and nature is unparalleled," he says.



This is an unparalleled sacrifice and example of the unity of all lives. There cannot be any better Religion than this on Earth. This is called Humanity, the sum-total of all dogmas, worship, and rituals. It is applied ahimsa. Here is real Jainism in practice –“Ahimsa Paramo Dharma.”

TEACHERS FOR AHIMSA PROGRAM

Three years ago, one High School teacher Ms. Laura Hirshfield from Boston, Massachusetts called and said “Dr. Jain, our kids in US schools see and learn violence (himsa) everywhere and every day but who is going to teach them about ahimsa (nonviolence)? She was referring to the killing and gun shooting

news every day in school and college campuses across America. She was perturbed that the kids in US grow in an environment of violence everywhere such as; broken homes, violent games, sports and toys, violence in media and entertainment, alcohol and drugs etc. etc. She was begging that something must be done to teach about ahimsa in US schools. Out of our discussion, the idea of a Teachers for Ahimsa Program was conceived. Laura developed the full details of this program and in 2012, took 15 High School Teachers (from several schools in USA) to India for a 3 weeks hands on experiential base learning and training program in ahimsa. This program was jointly developed and administered by International School for Jain Studies. See www.isjs.in for details. So far, 65 teachers have gone through this program and the number of participants is increasing every year. In their own way, not only most of the teachers who attended this program adopted ahimsa way of life but also started changing the minds and behaviors of the young kids from violence to nonviolence. We realize that this is a drop in an ocean but the 1000 miles journey always starts with the first step. Thank you Laura for becoming a role model and initiating a new paradigm shift.

JAINS DID NOT WALK AWAY FROM AHIMSA DURING THE PARTITION OF INDIA IN 1947

During the partition of India into East and West Pakistan and India in 1947, many thousands of Jains too got trapped in East and West Pakistan where they had lived for centuries prior to the partition. Due to full-blown hatred and mistrust that had been politically and communally developed between Muslims and Hindus, the news of partition resulted in uncontrollable murder, looting, raping and burning everywhere. As a result, it became extremely dangerous for Jains also other communities) to migrate from Pakistan to India. Jains too got engulfed in this mayhem but even in those trying times and against many odds when there was nothing but violence all around, Jains did not compromise with or walk away from ahimsa. They did become victims of violence themselves but

did not harm or injure anyone. This fact was pointed out to us by long personal camera recorded interviews of nearly 40 Jain survivors of this holocaust which was conducted by Mr. Mathew Fisher, a Research scholar from Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont California in 2013 in Delhi, Ludhiana and other cities in India. Such examples are rare in the history of human race and Jains stand out nearly at the top. I am so proud of this unique heritage of ahimsa and culture in Jains.

NORTH AMERICAN JAINS ABSTAINING FROM LEATHER

Due to a growing awareness about animal cruelty, about veganism, and an awareness about the origins of many daily use items, some Jains—and especially Jain youth in North America—have started abstaining from the use of leather and leather products. Items avoided include leather jackets, wallets, purses, belts, briefcases, camera and other cases, footwear, home furnishings (sofas and chairs), and automobile seats. While all the aforementioned items are easily available leather free, the real difficulty arises when buying luxury cars models such as Mercedes, Lexus, and BMW. It is hard to find many such model cars in dealer showrooms that are leather free. In many cases either one has to settle for a lower end car or one has to order luxury models months in advance, directly from the factories, and strangely at extra costs than what one would pay for leather seats.

I am so pleased to notice that sizeable number of Jains and our Jain youth, especially in the second generation, are willing to go through the pains of doing that but will not settle for cars with leather seats. In my own family, my children and spouse have gone that route. I am so glad that they do so and set a practical example for their own children in the third generation, to see.

VEGAN THANKS-GIVING

On November 20, 2010, I attended a vegan Thanksgiving dinner organized by the Houston PEACE (People for the

Earth, Animals, Compassion & Environment) Society. There were more than one hundred people, nearly all non-Indian, who came together to participate in a vegan Thanksgiving dinner celebration. The Houston PEACE Society is very active in teaching and promoting veganism, and thru their multi-pronged efforts, have been successful in helping many people choose a vegan and cruelty-free life.

There are, I am told, nearly six million vegans (equal to the total population of Jains in the world) in North America and this number is growing—all I can say is, “In my forty-nine years living in the West, I have seen that vegetarianism and veganism have become respectable and household words due to the efforts of movements such as the PEACE Society, Hare Rama Hare Krishna, Swami Narayan, and many pure vegan and vegetarian movements and restaurants throughout North America. Forty-nine years ago, when I came to the West, if I mentioned that I was a vegetarian, people thought that there was something wrong mentally with me, but not anymore. Nearly 20 million people practice vegetarian and vegan lifestyles here.

Many times, I wonder: where are the Jains in all this? It would not be easy to find many examples where Jains have been able to change the food habits of a substantial number of people, except a few.

I wish that Jains would join hands with such like-minded organizations to promote the ahimsak way of life (AWOL).

US CONGRESSMAN & CRUSADER FOR PEACE

Dennis Kucinich was a mayor of the city of Cleveland, a several term US Congressman, and also has been a presidential candidate. He is a pure vegan, is against wars, wants to establish a Department of Peace, and supports peaceful conflict resolutions. He has been a keynote speaker at one JAINA Convention, but in general the interaction between the Jain community and Mr. Kucinich has been very minimal. Here is a great opportunity for us Jains to provide support to this former congressman to promote our ahimsak causes.

COMPASSION BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Dr. Manoj Jain is a practicing physician in Memphis, Tennessee. He is the son of a classmate of mine, Dr. Vinay Jain from Boston. Manoj and my son are of the same age and they practically grew up together in the Boston area, where we too lived for many years. Manoj writes regularly in many newspapers including The New York Times, The Washington Post, as well as corresponding for CNN. Readers can view many of his writings and thoughts on www.mjain.net.

He is a role model for many about the ahimsa way of life. Please read on, in his own words about an encounter he had:

“I was standing at the bedside of a patient who was having shaking chills with a temperature of 103. Sweat covered his balding scalp like dew, then coalesced and rolled down his neck like raindrops. Just 20 minutes earlier, a specialist had visited him and talked with him about his dire prognosis of metastatic cancer. No family was in the room.

This was just my second visit to him. I wondered: How do I show compassion?

I recalled driving down Poplar Avenue after a downpour on the weekend Nashville got flooded. That is when I saw a woman in the opposite lane to me, standing in the middle of the road with her car pulled to the side. Like a state trooper with her raised hands, she was halting the traffic on Poplar.

Perplexed, I looked around until I saw a dome-shaped creature crossing the road. What made the woman risk her life to save a turtle? I'm a vegetarian and an animal-rights advocate, but I wouldn't risk my life to help a slow tortoise cross a wet and busy street.

As I drove on, in my rearview mirror I saw the turtle safely reach the other side. And I wondered: In the big picture, does a single small act of compassion really make any difference?

After all, we live in a world filled with violence. There are wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the festering conflicts in Israel and Palestine; and the homicides, robberies and shootings in our city. There are also nasty e-mail reply-alls at work and angry outbursts at home. The cycle of violence is perpetual, it seems.

We look for some kind of master plan to end all violence. We hope for a single meeting at work or a heartfelt conversation at home to make everything better. But as I grow older, I have realized that things don't happen that way.

Often in life, there are small acts of compassion: things people do without looking for reward or praise, acts for which people do not calculate the return on investment. These acts of compassion move us and bring us to tears.

Compassion has many modern-day champions. My favorites are Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. Each year in Memphis, the Gandhi-King Conference held at Christian Brothers University brings together national speakers to rejuvenate their spirit and the spirit of compassion within us.

This year, the conference opens with a talk by civil rights leader Rev. Samuel Billy Kyles at 1 p.m. Oct. 23. Tim Wise, a prominent anti-racist writer and activist, closes out the conference with a banquet dinner on Saturday night at Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church.

At these conferences, what I learn is that compassion and respect—tangible expressions of the philosophy of nonviolence—are opportunities for us to break the cycle of violence through our ordinary, everyday moments. Compassion is a necessary and learnable skill we need to develop.

And studies show that compassion is one of four traits that patients seek in their doctors, along with competency, communication skills and convenience.

As I considered what to do as my patient was lying in bed, I surveyed my surroundings and reached for a clean bath towel.

Gently, I wiped the sweat off his brow—a task often relegated to a nursing assistant or nurse. A few days later, my patient left the hospital with hospice.

As for the woman on Poplar, I am not sure if she realized that her simple act of compassion affected me. And I am not sure if my simple act may have an impact on others, who then will also do simple acts of compassion today, affecting still others, in a sort of cycle of nonviolence.”

CARE FOR INJURED BIRDS

In May of 2010, due to a major oil spill from the oil-pumping rig of BP Oil Company, in the Gulf of Mexico, thousands of sea birds and mammals were injured and became coated with the tar, thick oil, and toxic film. As a result, many could not move, fly, or even breathe. A large number started dying.

As soon as the pictures of this environmental disaster started becoming available, hundreds of animal activists and animal lovers descended on the scene and started cleaning the injured birds, caring for them, and thus saved the lives of thousands of these poor and helpless creatures affected by the man-made disaster.

This was again active—not just passive—compassion in action.

COMMUNITY ROLE MODELS IN AHIMSA

Every community has some role models to look to for guidance and example. We need to identify such people both within and outside the Jain community. Here is my short list of some of the people (please add to this list from your own contacts) I know and have come in touch with who inspire and challenge me to perceive and reflect upon the practice of ahimsa in everyday life.

Here are a few names that I know of; these teachers include:

Gurudev Chitrabhanu, New York

Pramoda Chitrabhanu, New York

Dr. Michael Tobias, Los Angeles
Prof. Glenn Paige, Honolulu, Hawaii
Prof. Gary Francione, Rutgers University, NJ
Fakirchand Dalal, Washington, DC
Saurabh Dalal, Washington, DC
Narinder Sheth, San Diego, CA
Pravin K. Shah, Raleigh, NC
Dr. Nitin Shah, Los Angeles, CA
Dr. Davendra Raj Mehta, Jaipur Foot, Jaipur
Ingrid Newkirk, PETA, USA
Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, M.P and Cabinet Minister in Central Govt in India.
Sanjay and Priti Jain of Northboro, MA
Plus hundreds of them more.

ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY EXAMPLES OF AHIMSA

In spite of my criticism, there are plenty of places of oasis—places of compassion, karuna and ahimsa within the Jain community today. My fellow Jain brothers and sisters, all is not lost. Ahimsa means compassion, karuna, daya, feeling the pain and sufferings of others, and then trying our level best to alleviate and lesson/reduce those sufferings. Ahimsa also means giving a daan (donation) of abhay (fearlessness) to other living beings.

The full list of acts and programs of compassion and Seva (service) by the Jain community are numerous and I have been personally exposed to only a few, which I mention below. However a complete list would be quite large. A sampling includes:

- o Cow and animal shelters throughout India. The most notable is the one in New Pavapuri in Rajasthan.
- o Leprosy Centers. I have personally seen one in Mysore run by the Jain community there.

- o Hundreds of orphanages, run by Jains.
- o The bird hospital in Old Delhi, in Jain Lal Mandir, opposite Red Fort. This is likely the only one of its kind in the world.
- o Medical camps. The Jain community organizes hundreds, if not thousands, of medical camps for the poor and sick throughout India. These camps offer free cataract surgeries, hearing aids, artificial feet and limbs, and mobility equipment. The one medical camp, held at Palitana at the end of December 2009, was the largest supported by the Jain Community. Similarly, Bidada Medical Camp, in Gujarat, has been going on for several decades. Similar medical camps are always organized by Veerayatan and hundreds of Jain organizations all over India.
- o Jains have opened and established many hundred free and charity hospitals to serve all sections of the Indian community. Ayurvedic and other dispensaries are quite common in many places.
- o Veerayatan, JAINA, and several other Jain organizations are actively engaged in seva (service) to the community at large. Whenever there are any natural disasters (Tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones, floods, droughts, and epidemics), these organizations swing into action right away, not only in India, but also in many other parts of the world.
- o Jaipur Foot and the incredible charitable work this organization is doing in providing prosthetic feet, knees, and legs (more than 1.5 million so far), throughout the world nearly impossible to describe. When one realizes the enormity of their compassion, words fail.
- o Jain doctors have organized themselves in doing seva and providing free medical aid and assistance to many.
- o The number of Jain, free educational institutions runs in the thousands.

o There are organizations in villages and towns that provide training in vocational skills to widows to help them earn their living.

AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL RIGHTS CRUSADER

Philip Wollen is a global animal-rights crusader, humanitarian activist, philanthropist, and motivational speaker, all in one. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia by Queen Elizabeth II in 2005, “for service to international humanitarian relief and to animal welfare, particularly through the establishment of the Winsome Constance Kindness Trust.” He is the winner of the Australian Humanitarian Award 2006 and was Australian of Year (Victoria), 2007. Phil graduated from Bishop Cotton’s School in 1967 (Pope House) as a third-generation Cottonian. He is the nephew of Air Marshal Mally Wollen (Retired), Old Cottonian and Patron of the General Thimayya Lecture series.

Aged 34, Phil was Vice President of Citibank, the largest financial institution in the world, working in Melbourne, Sydney, Manila, Singapore, Bangkok, London, New York, and Los Angeles. He specialized in Corporate Finance and was rated first among the Top 40 executives in Australia by one of Australia’s leading business journals. However, in the early 1990s he gave it all up for his altruistic pursuits, which have earned international acclaim.

He has established a private philanthropic trust called the Winsome Constance Kindness Trust (named after his mother and grandmother) with a view to help needy children and animals. Today, he privately supports 350 humanitarian projects for children, animals and the environment in forty countries – including schools, shelters, sanctuaries, orphanages, clinics, ambulances, bio gas plants and hospitals. One project, Kindness House in Melbourne, is 40,000 square feet and has 300 highly qualified young people doing incredible things for children, refugees, animals, and the environment.

In her review of his work, “Man and his Mission,” Australian writer Claudette Vaughan noted, “Some people would nominate Nelson Mandela as the most outstanding person alive. My vote would go to Philip Wollen.”

The journal Cry, published in Russian by the Leo Tolstoy Centre of Ethics, celebrated the “Top 100 Vegetarians in World History.” Amongst depictions of Aristotle, Buddha, Plato, St. Francis of Assisi, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Einstein, Leo Tolstoy, Pythagoras, Voltaire, Bernard Shaw, Albert Schweitzer, and Leonardo da Vinci, was a picture of Philip Wollen.

The following is an account of his work: “Philip Wollen, Australian Philanthropist, Former VP of Citibank, Makes Blazing Animal Rights Speech”

By Free From Harm Staff Writers | June 24, 2012

“Philip Wollen shakes the rafters of the auditorium with this 10-minute speech to the St James Ethics Centre and the Wheeler Centre debate in Australia on May 16, 2012. The larger debate consists of six speakers, three that make the case for getting animals off the menu and three that make the case against it. Wollen is a former VP of Citibank and Australian philanthropist who is known to keep out of the limelight. But he sure rose to the challenge for this debate to deliver a huge performance and a powerful message. Bravo!”

This is the transcript to the speech:

‘On behalf of St James Ethics Centre, the Wheeler Centre, The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, The Age, The City of Melbourne and the ABC, All of whom have worked together to make this event possible I would like to welcome

Philip Wollen.’ [Applause.]. Now hear Philip speak;

‘King Lear, late at night on the cliffs asks the blind Earl of Gloucester “How do you see the world?”

And the blind man Gloucester replies “I see it feelingly”.

Shouldn't we all?

Animals must be off the menu because tonight they are screaming in terror in the slaughterhouse, in crates, and cages. Vile ignoble gulags of despair. I heard the screams of my dying father as his body was ravaged by the cancer that killed him. And I realized I had heard these screams before. In the slaughterhouse, eyes stabbed out and tendons slashed, on the cattle ships to the Middle East and the dying mother whale as a Japanese harpoon explodes in her brain as she calls out to her calf. Their cries were the cries of my father. I discovered when we suffer, we suffer as equals. And in their capacity to suffer, a dog is a pig is a bear...is a boy. Meat is the new asbestos – more murderous than tobacco.

CO₂, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide from the livestock industry are killing our oceans with acidic, hypoxic Dead Zones.

90% of small fish are ground into pellets to feed livestock.

Vegetarian cows are now the world's largest ocean predator.

The oceans are dying in our time. By 2048 all our fisheries will be dead. The lungs and the arteries of the earth.

Billions of bouncy little chicks are ground up alive simply because they are male.

Only 100 billion people have ever lived. 7 billion alive today. And we torture and kill 2 billion animals every week.

10,000 entire species are wiped out every year because of the actions of one species.

We are now facing the 6th mass extinction in cosmological history.

If any other organism did this a biologist would call it a virus.

It is a crime against humanity of unimaginable proportions.

The world has changed.

10 years ago ‘Twitter’ was a bird sound, ‘www’ was a stuck keyboard, ‘Cloud’ was in the sky, ‘4G’ was a parking place, ‘Google’ was a baby burp, ‘Skype’ was a typo and ‘Al Kider’ was my plumber.

Victor Hugo said “There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

Animal Rights is now the greatest Social Justice issue since the abolition of slavery.

There are over 600 million vegetarians in the world.

That is bigger than the US, England, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Canada, Australia combined! If we were one nation we would be bigger than the 27 countries in the European Union!

Despite this massive footprint, we are still drowned out by the raucous hunting, shooting, killing cartels who believe that violence is the answer – when it shouldn’t even be a question.

Meat is a killing industry – animals, us, and our economies.

Medicare has already bankrupted the US. They will need \$8 trillion invested in Treasury bills just to pay the interest. It has precisely zero!

They could shut every school, army, navy, air force, and Marines, the FBI and CIA – and they still won’t be able to pay for it.

Cornell and Harvard say that the optimum amount of meat for a healthy diet is precisely ZERO.

Water is the new oil. Nations will soon be going to war for it.

Underground aquifers that took millions of years to fill are running dry.

It takes 50,000 liters of water to produce one kilo of beef.

1 billion people today are hungry. 20 million people will die from malnutrition. Cutting meat by only 10% will feed 100 million people. Eliminating meat will end starvation forever.

If everyone ate a Western diet, we would need 2 Planet Earths to feed them. We only have one. And she is dying.

Greenhouse gas from livestock is 50% more than transport...planes, trains, trucks, cars, and ships.

Poor countries sell their grain to the West while their own children starve in their arms. And we feed it to livestock. So we can eat a steak? Am I the only one who sees this as a crime? Every morsel of meat we eat is slapping the tear-stained face of a starving child. When I look into her eyes, should I be silent?

The earth can produce enough for everyone's need; But not enough for everyone's greed.

We are facing the perfect storm.

If any nation had developed weapons that could wreak such havoc on the planet, we would launch a pre-emptive military strike and bomb it into the Bronze Age.

But it is not a rogue state. It is an industry.

The good news is we don't have to bomb it. We can just stop buying it.

George Bush was wrong. The Axis of Evil doesn't run through Iraq, or Iran or North Korea. It runs through our dining tables. Weapons of Mass Destruction are our knives and forks.

This is the Swiss Army Knife of the future – it solves our environmental, water, health problems and ends cruelty forever.

The Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones. This cruel industry will end because we run out of excuses.

Meat is like 1 and 2 cent coins. It costs more to make than it is worth.

And farmers are the ones with the most to gain. Farming won't end. It would boom. Only the product line would change. Farmers would make so much money they wouldn't even bother counting it.

Governments will love us. New industries would emerge and flourish. Health insurance premiums would plummet. Hospital waiting lists would disappear.

Hell, 'We'd be so healthy; we'd have to shoot someone just to start a cemetery!'

So tonight I have two challenges for the opposition:

1. Meat causes a wide range of cancers and heart disease. Will they name one disease caused by a vegetarian diet?

2. I am funding the Earthlings trilogy. If the opposition is so sure of their ground, I challenge them to send the Earthlings DVD to all their colleagues and customers. Go on, I dare you.

Animals are not just other species. They are other nations. And we murder them at our peril.

The peace map is drawn on a menu. Peace is not just the absence of war. It is the presence of Justice.

Justice must be blind to race, color, religion or species. If she is not blind, she will be a weapon of terror. And there is unimaginable terror in those ghastly Guantanamos.

If slaughterhouses had glass walls, we wouldn't need this debate.

I believe another world is possible.

On a quiet night, I can hear her breathing.

Let's get the animals off the menu and out of these torture chambers.

Please vote tonight for those who have no voice.

Thank you."

See more at: <http://freefromharm.org/videos/educational-inspiring-talks/philip-wollen-australian-philanthropist-former-vp-of-citibank-makes-blazing-animal-rights-speech/#sthash.3b3na62C.dpuf>

Mrs. Maneka Gandhi's article in the Indian newspapers on Philip Wollen:

"Everyone in the animal welfare movement knows that the Australian, Philip Wollen, is not a human being. He is from another planet. They simply do not make humans like him anymore. He went from Bangalore to Australia when he was young, taught himself, got a job in a bank, rose to the top, left it, became rich and now donates all his money to animals and orphans and people who need it. He does so on a moment's notice. He doesn't want paperwork, he just needs to trust you and he does that easily. He picks up fights with aggressively anti animal governments and media, he pays for lectures, he supports the anti-whaling campaigns of activists around the world, he builds sanctuaries in Asia for bears. On top of that, he is tall, handsome, well read, a vegan, speaks his mind, jokes a lot and writes deliciously. He lives in Melbourne with a beautiful wife called Trix and they work to make their money save the world. The name of their trust is The Winsome Constance Kindness Trust. Obviously he has landed here on a UFO and the technical word for his species is 'angel.'

Philip's list of Daily Dos and Don'ts include:

- o Don't eat meat, eggs, or drink milk.
- o Eat as much raw food as possible.

- o Don't wear clothes made of animals - not even shoes, belts or watchbands.
- o Don't consume any product that is made by exploited labor.
- o Everything in your wardrobe of clothes that haven't been used in the previous year, give it away (but only if it is in good condition.)
- o Eliminate plastic from your life as far as possible...bags, boxes and credit cards - and some people.
- o Avoid negative people like the plague. Anyone who is not adding quality is subtracting quality.
- o Turn off every unused electrical appliance at the source.
- o Shorten your showers and washing loads.
- o Walk, or ride a bike, or use public transport - drive only if absolutely necessary.
- o Cut down on the amount of rubbish you send to landfill each week. I have cut down from 150 pounds a week to only 4 pounds - that is one briefcase of rubbish a week.
- o Drink water at room temperature - 2 litres a day - in sips.
- o Meditate at least one hour a day or at least read for two hours a day
- o Walk briskly at least one hour a day.
- o Take your pets for a long walk every day - and talk to them while you do it. And let them stop and sniff as often as they like. A walk is not a race.
- o Write at least one letter to the media or a politician every week. It doesn't have to be brickbat - a bouquet is fine too.
- o Grow your own vegetable garden or buy organic vegetables.
- o Pick up any rubbish you see in the park. It is the right thing to do - and do it in a visible way. It embarrasses the hell of everyone else who soon stop littering.
- o Buy a few flat bottom clay trays and leave them under the bushes and trees in the park. Each evening (or morning) when you take your dogs to the park, also take two 2 liter bottles of water and fill up the trays. During the drought

ten years ago my local park was baked dry and almost dead. Within 3 months of watering the little trays, the whole place became an ecosystem.

- o Today the park resonates with birdsong, and is full of little animals and insects. It is full of parrots, honey-eaters and even possums.
- o Dig in your garden – even if it's a balcony pot garden. Get your hands in the soil. Compost the beds. Plant native flowering shrubs. Buy a birdbath, a bird book and binoculars. Go top your local park or a public place and plant a tree. Plant at least 4 fruit trees for the fruit bats, monkeys and birds.
- o Keep the seed of the fruit you eat and put them in pots
- o Volunteer your services at any struggling NGO of your choice.
- o Play with a dog/cat etc at least once a day. And if possible let them occasionally eat from your hand. Ideal for rewards when they are being good.
- o Listen to music.
- o Give away money every week—regardless of the amount or the recipient. Try to calculate how much of your income you can give away without drastically affecting your health or happiness. (Not 'lifestyle'—because this means different things to different people—and is mostly rubbish.)
- o Ask at least one shopkeeper, flight attendant, or restaurant manager/waiter every day if they stock vegan products (particularly if you know they don't).
- o Wear a badge, cap, shirt, or pin which says 'Proud to be Vegetarian' or 'I don't eat dead bodies' or similar.
- o De-clutter your house every month. Give away everything you don't need.
- o To increase your happiness, do not aim to increase your possessions. Simply decrease your desires.”

For more on Phil, please visit www.kindnesstrust.com.

A SALUTE TO HOUSTON'S SIKH COMMUNITY

Eighteen years ago, a dear friend of mine of more than thirty-eight years, died suddenly leaving behind a young and issueless widow. This was his second marriage and the bride was seventeen years younger than him. She had been a naturalized US citizen for more than twenty years, had very little education, practically no skills, and was shy and very introverted. All these years, she worked in a department store as a clerk at the cash register, making just about minimum wage. Through her employer, she did have a medical insurance coverage.

Four years ago, in October, she went to India to visit her ailing father and other family members. Within two hours of her arriving in New Delhi, she suffered a heart attack and stroke and was paralyzed on her left side. She spent the next four months in New Delhi in hospitals and rehab centers, and with her family, where she improved a little, but not much.

Then she took the courage to return to Houston on her own. When we went to the airport to pick her up, we quickly realized that she needs a great deal of medical care and cannot live alone. She cannot even take a single step on her own, her left hand and foot are paralyzed and do not move at all. After a few medical check-ups, we arranged for her to be admitted in a skilled nursing care facility. As we started this process, we found out that she has no cash balance, is under debt with many credit cards running into at least twelve thousand dollars, needs money to pay her medical deductions, monthly rent for her apartment, monthly car payment, several other bills, and requires frequent driving to her medical appointments (it is very difficult for her to get in and out of the car even with assistance), help buying medicine, communicating with her employer, visiting the social security office for disability income, and daily visits. After doing all of these things for nearly four weeks, my wife and I became exhausted.

She and her late husband belong to Sikh community. I made an appeal via a simple email to an individual who is a respected

person within the Houston Sikh community; I simply asked him to help this person in as many ways as possible.

Within a few days, miracles started happening from the Sikh community. Very quickly, offers started pouring in for money donations, community people and families arrived to meet and visit with her and take care of her, and also help came from several medical doctors (including a neurologist, internist, and others) to offer not only all medical help but also go far beyond in all respects.

Within a couple of days, due to their help, she was admitted to a high class intensive care rehabilitation center cum hospital where, after many tests, her problems have been diagnosed, her proper treatment has started, some money has been raised, and a stream of people call and visit her often and are doing their very best to put her back on her feet.

I am really delighted and amazed at the outpouring of unconditional support and care by the Sikh community to offer its very best with compassion. I salute them for this culture of “love thy neighbor” in practice and not in talk only. I wonder how many other communities do that!

AHIMSA IN CRISIS - A CALL FOR ACTION

Ahimsa is the mool (root) mantra and foundation of Jainism. We can also say that ahimsa and Jainism are two names for the same thing; they are inseparable. In previous chapters, I have shared with you readers how this very foundation has begun becoming cracked, and thus the stability and survival of the whole building is endangered.

Some may not believe it, but even at this late stage, ahimsa is truly in crisis. Practice by its followers is slowly slipping away and based on individuals' personal wishes, desires, and conveniences, daily compromises are made. If this trend continues (and my feeling is that it may even accelerate), Jain philosophy will be found only in scriptures and books, and the Jain community will no longer will be identified as followers and practitioners of ahimsa—we will have lost the recognition and reputation which we Jains have enjoyed for many thousands of years. I consider decline of the practice of ahimsa to be like a growing cancer.

Before we try to cure the patient, we have to first diagnose the causes and only then administer the proper medicines and treatments. So what happened, and why we have come to this precarious place?

In my opinion there are many causes for this malaise, which we explore in this chapter.

AHIMSA: JUST A SLOGAN?

More than 2500 years ago, Bhagwan Mahavir shared the following reflection, saying, “There is nothing so small and subtle as the atom or any element as vast as space. Similarly, there is no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life.” Ahimsa is a principle that Jains should teach and practice, not only towards human beings, but also towards all creatures.

The teachings of ahimsa refer not only to wars and visible physical acts of violence, but also to the violence in the hearts and minds of human beings, their lack of concern and compassion for their fellow human beings and for the natural world. Ancient Jain texts explain that violence is not defined by actual harm only, for this may be unintentional. It is the intention to harm, the absence of compassion that makes action violent. Without violent thought there could be no violent actions. When violence enters our thoughts, we should remember, “You are that which you intend to hurt, injure, insult, torment, persecute, torture, enslave or kill.”

People all over the world today admire (and many follow) ahimsa. Some equate the unconditional ahimsa of the Jains to the true or real democracy of existence of all living beings in this universe.

In the twentieth century, the most vibrant and illustrious example of Jain influence was that of Mahatma Gandhi, acclaimed as the Father of the free Indian Nation. Gandhi-ji’s Spiritual mentor and friend, Shrimad Rājchandra, was a Jain. The two great men corresponded, until Rājchandra’s death, on issues of faith and ethics. The central Jain teaching of ahimsa was the guiding principle of Gandhi’s civil disobedience in the cause of freedom and social equality. His ecological philosophy found apt expression in his observation that the

greatest work of humanity could not match the smallest wonder of nature.

Jains inspired Mahatma Gandhi, who in turn inspired millions—including many Nobel Peace Laureates—to the philosophy of non-violence. It was a non-Jain (Gandhi-ji) who made the ahimsa of the Jains a household and respectable word, not just in India, but throughout the world. He took the Ahimsa of Jains from textbooks and from the Sadhus, and gave it to the most common men and women. This Practical Ahimsa made Gandhi-ji a role model for millions of people around the world. In 2007, the United Nations established October 2 as an International Day of Non-Violence in honor of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.

And yet, we have no Jain Gandhis, no Jain Peace Laureates. What does this tell us? To me, it appears that although we Jains inherited ahimsa as a rich gift, we seem not to care enough for this treasure. We have allowed ahimsa to become merely a slogan instead of shaping it into wider and broader practice.

CURRENT TRADITION WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT and VISIBLE ACTIVISM

Jains should be passionate about Ahimsa. They should be activists and instruments of change. Bhagawan Mahavir was. But we don't find many Jain activists for any major societal causes which are many. All the activists that I know of mostly happen to be non-Jains.

At an international seminar in 1998, at Harvard University on "Jainism and Ecology," several Western scholars pointed out that Jains talk of ecology and protection of environment but there is no Jain activist such as Sunder Lal Bahuguna or Arundhati Ray in India. There is also no example (except for Jain Sadhus) of active and visible practitioners of environmental protection within the majority of Jain community.

Nearly all Jains preach and practice vegetarianism, but the credit for spreading not only vegetarianism, but also veganism

and animal rights in last 50 years, does not go to Jains but goes generally to non-Jains, mostly from the western world. There is hardly any Jain-inspired or established (that I know of) organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), PCRM (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicines), or AVS (Anti-Vivisection Societies). A few years ago, a few of us participated in a “March for Animal Rights in Washington D.C.” Out of the 30,000 plus persons taking part in the march, there were hardly any Jains (only about five to seven, at the most). In the West, non-Jains such as Hare Krishnas and followers of Swami Narayan (not Jains) have been in the forefront in making vegetarianism acceptable.

The unconditional respect for all forms of life implies that Jains should be in the forefront in the practice of ahimsa in all its shapes and forms. The scope and landscape of ahimsa is vast. Jains should be the preeminent role models for others. Unfortunately, during the last hundred years, movements including in support of human and civil rights, animal rights, eradication of child labor and sweat shops, support of women’s rights and cessation of abuse, ethical and environmentally friendly investing, promotion of laws against animal torture and hunting, restriction of the use of animals in sports and entertainment, regulations to ensure worker safety and occupational and health safety, civil disabilities acts, the eradication of capital punishment, ethical bioethics, medical ethics, business ethics and legal ethics and work towards all of these are based on and related to the practice of ahimsa, but these projects have generally been started by non-Jains. Generally, Jains have been the beneficiaries but not the torchbearers for such movements and protests.

CURRENTLY THE JAIN COMMUNITY SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFERENT SET OF PRIORITIES

We are building temples for poojas (worship) but not for teaching and training in ahimsa. The Jain community is affluent, dynamic, and educated. The recent census of the

Government of India mentioned that Jains have the highest literacy rate (97%). Because of their affluence, Jains have always been building temples.

Some of the most beautiful and magnificent temples in India are the Jain temples. Even while the number of Jain temples in India in poor conditions abounds, every day the world over, newer and bigger temples are being built quite frequently. Temples do serve the very important needs for pooja, worship, community gatherings, unity, and observance of rituals and festivals. Yet many of these places of worship generally do not offer, on a regular basis, the teachings and training in Jain doctrines, in the practice of practical and applied Jainism, and in 3 As of Jainism; ahimsa, anekantavada (non-one-sidedness) and aprigraha (non attachment and limits on possessions) that can be used in our daily lives and professions.

LACK OF TEACHING, TRAINING, GROUNDING, AND DISCUSSION ON AHIMSA

Experience shows that experiments in the use of himsa (violence) do not succeed without training. Today, there are many centers in the world that impart training in himsa. Some of them are being run in the name of national security, while others are being operated with a specific purpose of gaining some benefits or advantages. Violence cannot take an aggravated and barbaric form without intensive training.

It is also absolutely true that without training, one's consciousness of non-violence can neither be awakened nor developed. Life today is full of problems that need solutions. Non-violence is a solution. What we need is its systematic training. Training in non-violence is essential for all.

Knowingly, unknowingly, directly, and indirectly, today's lifestyle involves hundreds of tiny, daily examples of himsa, mostly hidden from our views, in our own lives. Certainly, our lives today are more himsa-filled than was perhaps even one hundred years ago; every day society and corporations

are inventing newer and more intensive ways to commit larger scale and more barbaric himsak actions and products.

How will anyone know and understand ahimsa when there is a lack of any organized and formal discussion, teaching, training, and grounding in ahimsa? How do we begin to consider this undertaking when we recognize that many youngsters, and let alone adults don't have this knowledge? Some adults may have advanced academic and scriptural knowledge but very little understanding about the application of ahimsa in daily life outside the temple.

In the temples, Jains mostly learn the rituals. From the environment in which Jains grow and live, mostly they learn about Thali (the food plate) and how to avoid or minimize himsa for Thali. In most Jain temples, derasars, sthanaks, and places of worship, there are not sufficient (especially in India) arrangements for Jain pathshalas (teaching schools/classes). Even if they are there, there is very little interest and effort in imparting realistic, practical and rational education about ahimsa. Yes, in some places, we do teach kids the basic Jain stotras (hymns) and mantras, but seldom do we go much beyond.

Let me share with you the importance of early education and role models. About twenty years ago, when we were living in Cincinnati, Ohio, one Jain couple (both raised in highly religious families in India) came to visit us for dinner with their two teenage boys. As is the custom with us, before sitting down for dinner, I asked the couple and their kids to do the darshan (visit) of the small Jain household temple that we had built in our home. Inside this household temple (chaityalya), we had on one wall a photo of a Jain Sathankvasi sadhu with a mukhvastrika (mouth covering cloth) and against another wall we had a nine-inch pratima (idol) of Bhagwan Mahavir in pure white marble.

As soon as I opened the doors of the temple, and put the lights on, the parents bowed down but the kids did not and

said to their parents, “The guy in mukhvastrika looks funny with his face covering,” and asked why a stone was there [referring to the pratima]. This was very embarrassing for all of us and parents kept on telling their children to keep their mouths shut and not say such bad words.

At this stage, I told the parents that the fault lies with them, the parents and not with the children as they had no grounding, in any shape or form, about Jainism and items of worship and reverence and hence the pratima was just a piece of stone. About a month later, another Indian couple—but non-Jains—came to visit us for dinner. Then too, I did the same ritual with them. As soon as I opened the temple doors and put the lights on, the couple along with their three teenage boys lay prostrate (in shashtaang) on the ground and paid their respects and reverence to the temple, and to all the objects of worship there in. No one questioned what and why. I was a bit surprised since none of them was Jain. To this, the father replied, “Sulekh-ji, from their birth, all the kids have been given grounding in showing respects and reverence to all religions.”

This is where proper and early grounding comes in. I believe that if a proper, practical, and early grounding in ahimsa can be provided during the important developmental years, when young people become adults, they will not easily go astray. I have heard of and seen several Jain youths who grew up in strict Jain families in India, and as soon as they boarded a flight to come to the US from India, ordered non-veg foods at the very first opportunity, far away from the watchful eyes of their parents in India. The clear reason for this transgression is that these young people never received any real grounding in ahimsa from their parents, sadhus, temples, or from the environment in which they grew up.

Quite often, I meet Jain boys and girls in their twenties who are in US as temporary IT professionals. When I ask them about their grounding in Jainism and Ahimsa, they look at me as if I was speaking a foreign language.

WE PRACTICE WHAT WE SEE

We all are products of our environment. We learn from what we see. If we see greed, deceit, unlimited affluence, uncontrolled waste, and recognition in the community, that is what we try to emulate and become. If we see and hear about some notorious Dalal Street swindlers like some infamous Mehta, Parekh, and Bhansali, then that is what we emulate and try to become.

WE NEED TO EMBRACE THE FIVE ANUVRATAS and NOT THE FIVE MAHAVRATAS

Unfortunately we mostly hear, read, and talk about the lives of sadhus but there is very little talk about the lives of shravaks and shravikas. There is too little talk about Shravak-aachaar (the conduct of a householder) and discussion of some householders who can serve as role models. Yes, the life of a sadhu is the highest living model for us, to which we must aspire when we become renunciates, but first we must concentrate on becoming good shravaks. The five Mahavrata are for sadhus and not for householders. Unfortunately, we talk about Mahavrata, but our daily way of life is not even close to the standard set by any anuvratas (minor vows).

This reminds me of an incident. A few years ago, as part of an interfaith movement, a group of some fifty non-Indian Jains (all Westerners) were coming to visit a Jain temple in the US. Several prominent members of the Jain community were busy in making proper preparations to welcome the guests and also to show and share about our Jain tradition, philosophy, and history.

I asked one active Jain volunteer what he would talk about Jainism when it was his turn to share. He replied, “Uncle, I will talk about the five mahavrata.” I laughed and said to him, “Why not talk about the five anuvratas? The guests will know and realize that Jains are one of the most affluent and pragrahi people on earth, are not celibate, and have no monopoly on truth and other virtues.” He understood my point.

The time has come that we should embrace the five anuvratas not as a slogan but in real practice. Acharya Tulsi-ji tried his very best sixty plus years ago to emphasize the five anuvratas, but after a few years, it just became a mere slogan.

OUR COMMUNITY HAS MANY SADHUS and SADHVIS, and STILL JAINISM is NEARLY UNKNOWN

Amongst a total Jain population of nearly 5-7 million, we have more than 15,000 renunciates (muniis, acharyas, sadhus, sadhvis, samans, samanias, ailak, kshullaks, aryika ji, and pundits) in all the traditions, sects, and sub-sects of Jainism. Compared to any other non-Jain religious tradition in India, Jain sadhus are well-educated, they observe the five mahavratas (great vows), most of them practice what they preach, they command a very high degree of respect and reverence within the Jain community, are always on the move (they travel the length and breadth of India on foot), are in constant touch with their followers, and since the Jain community provides food, shelter and clothing, the sadhus do not have to worry about any such basic needs. Their main duty and goal is to study, practice self-purification, and to guide and preach to their followers about Jain philosophy and its rich culture.

Similarly, the Jain community (lay people) is very educated, affluent, dynamic, progressive, and philanthropically minded. Since there is no GOD or creator in Jainism, there are hardly any major fights and disputes on that basis within the community. As a result, the community enjoys a reasonable level of harmony, peace, and prosperity.

In spite of this, the sad reality is that Jainism is the least known and most misunderstood tradition, not only outside India but within India as well. In addition, the practice of ahimsa is slipping so fast within the community that Jains are in danger of losing ahimsa as its identifier. Let me share a few incidents to illustrate the depth of this malaise.

If one looks at Google, Amazon.com and other internet search engines, one will find hardly one thousand books on Jainism as opposed to probably a million on Buddhism. If this is the case, how will people know about Jainism?

What some authors (especially from the West) write about Jainism, the viewpoints are distorted, wrong, and sometimes just slanderous. Once this happens—and it happens every day—then the misperception is repeated and perpetuated and this is what people come to believe.

The general perception is that Jains live an unreachable life of other-worldliness, practice self-mortification, and do not contribute much to the welfare of the society. As a result, Jainism is not relevant in today's environment.

When one looks at the Jain literature today, most of it deals with the lifestyles of sadhus and kings but very little is said of the householders. So the perception grows that Jainism is only about other-worldliness. The further pity is that one will find only a few books about ahimsa and its practice within the community.

Dr. Michael Tobias produced a one-hour long video on ahimsa, and also wrote a book entitled *Life Force of Jainism*, in which he deals with the practice of ahimsa. Jains in general have shied away from such projects.

Prof. Jeffrey Long at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, who has been teaching world religions for a long time, observed that only a very few of his graduate or undergraduate students were actually interested in the study of Jainism. Prof. Long discovered that most of the students he encountered were turned off by Jainism because it seems unrelated to the real world, and it generally teaches only about other-worldliness.

Similarly, in a graduate class of world religions at the University of Hawaii, Prof. Cromwell Crawford asked his students what they knew about Jainism. The responses he got included, "Jains are those who make the biggest nudist colony in the world." Another response was "Jains are those who wrap themselves

with white bed sheets, with cloth masks on their faces and brooms in their hands and clean the streets of India.” If these accounts do not bring one pain, what will?

The Jain community has abdicated many of their duties and responsibilities to respond to the constant changes facing the community, and to help shape it.

Jain sadhus and sadhavis, with their lifestyle of austerity, their vow of five Mahavaratas, and their scholarly knowledge of Jain agamas, provide a great service to the community in terms of imparting knowledge and keeping the Jain community and traditions alive. But Jain sadhus, because of the limitations of their code of conduct, cannot be expected to be experts in all aspects of the day to day practice of ahimsa as they themselves don’t experience the daily challenges and pressures of householders’ lives.

For example, sadhus cannot be experts about professions such as business, accounting, law, engineering, medicine, new and developing technologies, the ecology and environment, sustainability, public administration, police, military, trade, investing, accounting, and on issues such as abortion, end of life situations and decisions, and bioethics. Just a simple talk or discourse on the basics of ahimsa is not enough to help ordinary people find suitable and practical answers for day-to-day practitioners of such professions.

Even if some sadhus are dynamic and social reformers, they too often shy away from discussing such topics in public. Most are content in delivering the daily or weekly pravachan purely as a ritual and that too is only given on non-ahimsak topics.

The Jain community likes to attend lectures that are entertaining rather than perceptive, critical, visionary, and rational. In general, they (householders) also lack the interest and patience for discussing and hearing such lectures about ahimsa.

During the last few years, I sought to organize Ahimsa Vichaar Manch (ahimsa discussion forums) and seminars on

ahimsa. I called several Jain centers in North America hoping to build programs. I am sorry to say, I found no interest at all. At one place, I was lucky to get it started but after just two sessions, it had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. Instead, the popularity, frequency, and intensity of poojas, rituals, and money collections are increasing; many times individual interest in these is directly proportional to the level of affluence in the community.

I have mentioned before—a Jain sadhu/muni has tremendous influence on a householder. Because of this inherent power that a sadhu/muni has, he can be a very powerful instrument for change, especially in teaching the community about ahimsa. Unfortunately, they too miss the boat most of the time.

Let me share an incident that illustrates this. About ten years ago, I had gone to the city of Indore in India. This city, with a sizeable Jain population, has the unique distinction of being a prominent center of Jain culture. At that time, a few Jain Digambar Munis were staying there. One day, I went to observe the ahar (food) giving tradition by the Jain community to a few of these munis.

As is the custom with the Digambar munis, they take food only once every twenty-four hours, before noon only. In practice, several devotees prepare the prescribed food and request the munis to accept their food. The muni generally has taken a small vow or a pre-condition (known only to the muni), and if that condition is met, he agrees to take food from that devotee.

After observing all this, I saw the muni-ji agreeing to accept the food from one householder only. Now, before he began eating, he asked the devotees (in this case, a Jain couple) to accept and take certain vows; once that happens, then and then only would the muni-ji start taking the food.

I watched this scene with a strong interest, as I wanted to know what kinds of vows muni-ji was asking his devotees to take. To my surprise, I noticed that the muni-ji asked his

devotes to take vows to refrain from eating after sunset and also to avoid certain kinds of pickles during certain times of the year. Please note—all of this relates to Thali ahimsa only.

In the afternoon, I went to meet with the same muni-ji in private at the place where he was staying. Here I said to him, “Respected muni-ji, you command a great deal of respect and a spiritual power within the Jain community. You have the power to shape the community. Today, I was surprised that you did not use that power effectively. Instead of asking your devotees to take vow of not eating after sunset and certain kinds of pickles, you could have asked them not to use and deal in animal-based products like silk, leather, wool, pearls, and silver foils and to abstain from all kinds of adulterations in food.” To this he had no answers and he basically ignored me.

We talk of veganism and cruelty-free products. And yet, one will be hard pressed to find even a dozen sadhus who do not use dairy products such as milk and milk products. In my opinion, either they don’t believe that there is himsa in milk production or they don’t want to know about it. Three years ago, during my trip to India, I was giving a talk about Ahimsa at a Jain institution and talked about himsa in the production of milk. After the seminar, I was told very plainly by a Jain sadhu not to talk about milk here. Imagine if sadhus become vegan (abstain from dairy products), how big a change that will bring within the Jain community. I am of the opinion that once you start giving up with dairy products, slowly the community will listen to other issues affecting ahimsa.

Many Jains currently display both a lack of understanding of Jain philosophy and pride in being Jain. This strange combination creates the mindset of “everything goes,” and the false belief that all choices are equally okay and acceptable.

Additionally, many religious speakers are either ignorant themselves or do not want to talk about anything beyond the most basic issues. They say only those things that will please their listeners and financial contributors.

What used to distinguish Jains from the majority is very quickly disappearing; a time is approaching when Jains will be no different than the rest in terms of their behaviors and lifestyle.

LACK OF VISIONARY AND COMMITTED LEADERS

At present, there is vacuum of non-sectarian, broadminded, visionary, dynamic, influential, dedicated, committed, educated, unifying and anuvarati leaders within the Jain community. Because of changing demographics and new and ever-changing environments, we are in need of leaders who can inspire and prepare the Jain community to respond to these changes rightly and in a timely manner. If we don't do that, we will suffer the fate described in the following adage: "If we always do what we always did, we will always get what we always got." This is a sure formula for perishing.

WHY DID GANDHISM FAIL AND PRACTICALLY DISAPPEAR FROM INDIA?

Mahatma Gandhi devoted all his life to the practice of ahimsa and truth. Jains' value of autonomy, as well as the concept of swaraj or "self-rule," were essential components for Gandhi's nonviolent movement.

Gandhian scholar Pratibha Jain suggests that Gandhi's primary legacies were his autonomous interpretation of Jain doctrines and the subsequent variations he developed. Gandhi transformed personal practices of nonviolence into collective action and he extended his reinterpretation of vows beyond the purpose of self-purification so that they became tools for political peace that hastened Indian independence.

Yet, soon after Gandhi-ji's death, his followers (except a few like Acharya Vinoba Bhave) mostly abandoned ahimsa and as a result Gandhi and his philosophy nearly disappeared from India. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that very few of Gandhi-ji's followers were ahimsak, did not believe much in his

philosophy, were not even vegetarian, and were with Gandhi-ji only for their own self interests of achieving independence for India. Once that was accomplished, their mission—and interest in Gandhi's way of life —was over.

It is ironic that Gandhi-ji was known for ahimsa, yet his followers abandoned him and Gandhism became irrelevant. I am afraid that similarly, Jainism is known for Ahimsa and once this disappears, Jainism will become irrelevant, too.

WE MUST PRACTICE BEFORE WE PREACH

The importance of this cannot be over emphasized. How can we tell our kids not to smoke if we are smokers ourselves? It just does not work that way. Kids learn from their parents first and later from their teachers, peers, and the environment.

- o Once I read a story that shared the account of one mother whose son used to eat lots of candy and would not give them up no matter what. She brought this son to Mahatma Gandhi and requested Gandhi-ji to advise her son to give up candies. Gandhi-ji told the mother to bring her son back to him after a month, which she did. Then, a month later, Gandhi said to the boy to give up candy. The boy agreed and promised that he would not eat candy any more. The mother was very pleased but at the same time puzzled. She asked Gandhi-ji, if it was so simple, why did he not say the same thing to her son a month ago? To this Gandhi-ji replied that a month ago, he too used to eat candy, but not anymore. So, one can see the power of practice before preaching. Unfortunately in the Jain community, too many times parents, society, and leaders don't practice what they preach and so the cycle goes on. This is one major cause of the malaise in our community.
- o To illustrate the importance of this, a few years ago, one non -Jain Swami Ji told me that during one camp/shivir for youth, there was no hot water for bath. It was also a cold day. Fearing that many youths will complain and will not take bath, this sadhu himself voluntarily went and took bath in

the cold water. Seeing this all the youths did the same and no one complained.

- o Here is another real story to illustrate this point. Recently one High School teacher from Fort Worth, Texas who had attended the Teachers for Ahimsa Program in 2013 in India (already mentioned in an earlier chapter) called and told me that one day while teaching the 4th grade class, one cockroach came in the classroom. Instead of killing the helpless creature, she picked up the poor fellow in a glass jar and very gently discharged him outside in the bushes. Seeing this, the students asked why did she (the teacher) not kill the cockroach as this is what they all normally do in their homes. Now the teacher started a long discussion on ahimsa, compassion and respect for all lives. The kids were so impressed that next day some of them decided not to eat meat any more. Wow, what a great example of Practice before preaching!

THE NEED FOR APPLIED JAINISM AND JEEVAN VIGYAAN (THE ART & SCIENCE OF LIVING)

Our education must also concern itself with Jeevan Vigyaan (the art and science of living). Beyond philosophy, understanding pooja, worship, and rituals, we must also teach and learn how to practice the teachings, doctrines, and Jain way of life in our daily, active life such as in business and professions. This is Applied Jainism. This is walking the talk. This is what Gandhi-ji (by his own practice and example) showed and offered to the world.

Today, the areas and developments in law, business, medicine, organ transplant, cloning, environment, ecology, DNA, stem cell, and genome research, issues of bioethics and abortion, the spread of new diseases, food production, transportation, space initiatives, and local and global conflicts have created new environments and needs and Jainism must research, debate, and seek to offer new, practical, and timely solutions to these urgent and vexing challenges.

Business leaders not only have to make profits for their corporations, but they also have societal responsibilities. When making decisions, a businessperson must be aware of the impact on society, the environment and ecology, the creation or prevention of pollution, human relations, employees, fellow workers, and a regard for openness, honesty in transactions, good job creations, and many other issues and concerns of the society as a whole. A business leader is part of the society in which he lives and his overarching role is to make that society better. Similarly, a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a certified public accountant, or a financial securities broker must weigh his decisions using the yardstick of ethics and responsibility to the society.

WE HAVE MANY MOTHERS BUT NOT MANY MOMS

One Sanskrit shloka reminds us, “One picture is equal to thousand words, one teacher is equal to thousand books, and one mother is equal to thousand teachers.”

A mom (maata) is the one who generally forms the personality of a child. She is not only the boss of the house but also a role model that can make a house into a living heaven. In today’s world, many women become mothers (this is simply a natural phenomenon) but very few become moms.

A very high percentage of girls achieve high educations and eventually become mothers as well, but there are very few schools or training centers within the Jain community to impart training to develop them into good shravikas and moms. If the raw materials or ingredients are less than perfect, so will be the products.

WHERE SHOULD ONE GO FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING IN AHIMSA?

This is a real question that was posed to me in Houston. In late November 2010, I was invited to listen to a talk by a

visiting scholar from Costa Rica. She was going to speak about practical application of non-violence, which she teaches there, and how she has been successful in reducing violence and the school dropout rate in Costa Rica.

I have been to Costa Rica three times, on vacation. It is a beautiful country. In the early 1940s, Costa Rica abolished their Department of Defense and the military. I think Costa Rica is the only country of its size in the world that does not have any army. In the 1980s, the United Nations opened a Peace University there—again, the first of its kind. In 2010, due to this culture of peace, Costa Rica established a full-fledged Department of Peace. How impressive—again, the first in the world.

Now, Costa Rica is facing a new challenge. Since there is peace and tranquility there and Costa Ricans enjoy a comparatively higher standard of living, many drug lords from neighboring countries (including Guatemala, Colombia and Mexico) are now moving in and threatening the peace and stability of that country; this brings a new problem for the government.

The government is at a loss regarding how to deal with this situation in a peaceful way. This speaker (from Costa Rica) and I had a long private chat. She knew very little about Jainism and its ahimsa. I took the opportunity to give her a much bigger and detailed picture of Jainism and its philosophy. She got very curious. She asked me “are there teaching and training centers run by Jains in India where I can get practical training in how to apply ahimsa?” She also wondered aloud about the possibility of arranging for many government officials, including the Minister of the Department of Peace—to come to India and get practical training how to apply ahimsa in this kind of situation. You all probably can imagine the reaction on my face. I had to say, “Sorry.”

Is this not a pity?

A CALL TO ACTION

When so much is at stake, we cannot be just spectators. If Rome were burning, we would not merely enjoy the show.

We must take charge and start with action plans. I offer the following list (simply one person's thinking), which by no means is complete. In fact it is a very meager attempt to get the community to do some brainstorming in response. I am sure by brain storming by like-minded people, this list can become quite impressive and big. My ideas include:

1. Make awareness, teaching, and training in ahimsa as our first priority. This should be done in all sermons, lectures, and at each and every place of worship.
2. Several organizations and institutions should hold regular seminars on how ahimsa can and should be practiced in the professions.
3. Establish Ahimsa Vichaar Munch (ahimsa discussion groups) at each Jain center.
4. Create and raise up at least one hundred role models who can inspire others about ahimsa.
5. Write, create, and share books, articles, videos, CDs, DVDs, songs, movies, podcasts, webinars, and blogs about ahimsa.
6. Persuade at least one hundred sadhus/sadhvis of all Jain sects to become vegans and start preaching about it, and thus become catalysts for change.
7. Create, maintain, and share forums and discussion groups on the internet for all Jains to share ideas and learn from each other.
8. Collect data about individuals (monks, nuns, and lay people) who practice, preach, promote ahimsa and do some significant and exemplary work and projects towards an ahimsak way of life (AWOL).
9. To help kick start and promote a pure ahimsak (Jain vegan) lifestyle, we should think of organizing teaching camps, shivirs, and programs of two-three week duration.
10. Impart the grounding in ahimsa in young minds at a very early age.

11. Collaborate with like-minded ahimsa organizations and groups world over.
12. Establish recognition and awards for exemplary and exceptional work and the demonstrable practice of ahimsa.
13. Individuals communities should become watch dog groups about ahimsa and should not give honors to those who break the cardinal principle of ahimsa.
14. Establish full-fledged year round centers that conduct and share research in today's needs for ahimsa, and impart teaching and training and monitor its progress.

WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN TO US?

Jainism has the right message for the present time. Prof. John Koller of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute states, "Perhaps the greatest contributions to Indian life were made by Jain exemplars of moral virtue and careful reasoning. Their migration from the Ganges Valley to the southern tip and over the western borders of the subcontinent allowed them to spread the best of Indian culture to these parts of India through their exemplary lives. Jain adherents to the rule of non-injuring has been a major factor in the importance that this moral principle has assumed in Buddhist and Hindu life over the centuries. Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu saint whose adherence to non-injuring in his successful efforts to throw off the yokes of British colonial rule, bringing the principle of nonviolence to the admiring attention of the whole world, gratefully acknowledged the great impression made on him by the virtuous Jains he knew as a youth."

On May 7, 2014, Professor Philip Clayton (former Dean and Provost at Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont California wrote;

"Dear Friends, In a few minutes I will be teaching this beautiful article on Jainism and Ecology, "views of nature, nonviolence, and vegetarianism," by Michael Tobias, first published in Mary

Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds., *Worldviews and Ecology*. I have attached the article here, although you probably already know it.

I write to you in part because I am moved by its description of the power of the Jain way of life and by the importance of this message in a world facing ecological catastrophe. I write to you even more because I am struck by how essential it is that this message of Applied Jainism be made available in American higher education. Future leaders do not need a “secular,” post-religious worldview that tells everyone to “just get along.” In the world’s oldest religion, Jainism, there is such a depth of wisdom that we can never re-create it simply by inventing a new worldview or ethical code. And of course Jainism is not the only religion of depth; the messages of the other ancient wisdom traditions are also important.

I am moved to write you to encourage you not to give up the quest that first brought the four of us together. Our dream was right; our goals were noble; and what we sought to establish is just as needful today as before. I am convinced in the depth of my being that it is crucial that graduate students, the future leaders of America, are exposed to these teachings. They will express them in different ways, no doubt. But without this guidance they will not have the wisdom to address the profound challenges that await their generation.

In friendship, Philip”.

If we don’t start acting quickly and in unison, our fate will be what Mahavir Sanglikar-bhai, mentioned in his satirical way in describing Butcher Land. Soon there will be many Jain butcher lands all around and within us. The day is not far off when a new definition of ahimsa will emerge which will condone every kind of himsa by Jains with the only possible exception being in the Thali. Even that is becoming a distinct possibility. In a world of rapid change you either move forward or you move backward. I am afraid that as things are moving in real life (I see it happening daily) when meeting a

fellow Jain, one will be asking if he is a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian Jain.

Dr. Brianne Donaldson, noted Jain scholar, wrote the following call for action: “I want to hear everyone talking about Jainism. I want religion and philosophy departments teaching it. I want ecologists and agricultural technicians exploring its sustainability models. I want animal ethicists investigating it. I want metaphysicians engaging its textual and cosmological claims. I want economics departments examining its charitable giving and solvency. I want diplomats, nonviolent practitioners and just war theorists scrutinizing it as a viable political way of life. In short, I want it on the lips of every discipline, colliding with existing wisdom, challenging epistemological strongholds, and generally throwing a wrench into any sentiment that would dismiss as impractical the possibilities of humans living in a fundamentally different manner in our current and future worlds.”

I hope and pray that we are listening to her.

I want to close this chapter with a clarion reminder from an American musician John Denver, who wrote,

***“Yes there still is time to turn around
And make all hatred cease
Let’s give another name to living
And we can call it peace.”***

RESOURCES FOR VEGETARIANISM & VEGANISM

These days there are hundreds, if not thousands, of websites, societies, groups, books, magazines, and videos all devoted to vegan and vegetarian practices and lifestyles. For more information, one only has to search on Google. Below is a listing of just a few.

One very good source on vegan resources that I have come across is the book *Making Kind Choices* by Ingrid Newkirk. This book is a wealth of information. Others include:

- o Prof. Gary Francione's website, www.abolitionistapproach.com,
- o Prof. Glenn Paige's website on the Global Center for Non-killing, www.nonkilling.org,
- o The Jiv Daya website, www.jivdaya.org,
- o The website for the Physicians' Committee for Responsible medicine (PCRM), www.pcrm.org; they can also be reached by phone at +1 202.686.2210.

Still others include:

- o The website for the organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), www.peta.org
- o Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM), www.farmusa.org/about.htm, and at +1 301.530.1737

- o Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG), www.vrg.org, and at +1 410.366.8343
- o Compassion Over Killing (COK), www.cok.net
- o Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), www.humanesociety.org
- o Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary, www.animalsanctuary.org
- o United Poultry Concerns (UPC), www.upc-online.org
- o Vegan Society, www.vegansociety.com
- o Vegetarian Society of DC (VSDC), www.vsd.org, and at +1 202.362.8349
- o Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA), www.jewishveg.com
- o Christian Vegetarian Association, www.christianveg.org
- o Vegan Outreach, www.veganoutreach.org
- o European Vegetarian and Animal News Agency (EVANA), www.evana.org
- o London Vegans, www.londonvegans.org.uk
- o UK Vegetarians, www.vegetarian.org.uk
- o Not Milk, www.notmilk.com
- o China Study, a source for a whole-food, plant-based diet, www.thechinastudy.com
- o End Factory Farming, www.factoryfarming.org.uk
- o Jain Vegans: Jain Vegans supports members of the Jain community in the transition towards a plant-based low-himsa lifestyle, and helps raise awareness about the abuse, violation and killing of cows in milk production. You can find out more about Jain Vegans online (www.jainvegans.org)

And additional helpful articles and resources can be found on the following pages and sites:

- o Natural Mom, a compendium of articles related to food choices and parenting, www.naturalmom.com/milk.htm
- o Earth Save, www.earthsave.org
- o www.Vegan.com

- o www.Supervegan.com
- o www.GoVeg.com
- o “vegetarian” page on Love to Know, www.vegetarian.lovetoknow.com

Here is a fact that many may not know: 60 billion animals give their lives annually for an industry that confines, tortures, and brutally slaughters them to feed us and to make a profit.

Watch the documentary “Earthlings”, which looks in depth at the daily horrors animals endure throughout the world and you will likely have a change of heart about why one should be vegan.

Finally, film actress and activist Alicia Silverstone has a fantastic cookbook called *The Kind Diet* and has a website called *The Kind Life*: <http://thekindlife.com/>.

And the Post Punk Kitchen has dozens of delicious recipes and is full of extra resources:

<http://www.theppk.com/>

A general ignorance about vegetarianism means that eating non-veg is taken for granted and so, many aspects of our daily life contain animal products and by-products. It is extremely disheartening that many companies are fooling vegetarians by adding non-veg ingredients to day to day consumable products, meaning that well-intentioned vegetarians unknowingly participate in animal cruelty.

HOW TO BE A COMPASSIONATE CONSUMER?

Your choice as a consumer affects the lives (and deaths) of millions of animals. By consciously avoiding the use of animal-based products, you not only save animal lives, you set an example to others and eventually persuade manufactures to use alternatives.

When you buy animal-based products you are consciously supporting and promoting the exploitation of animals. There

are many products in the market that are ostensibly vegetarian but in fact contain animal-based ingredients. It is therefore necessary to both recognize them yourself as well as alert others to them. You should also examine the packaging; for example —jewelry may not contain animal parts but if it comes in a silk-lined, leather box, be sure to state your objection, refuse the packaging, and deduct the cost of it from your purchase.

In what ways can we productively raise consciousness about animal-based products? The most common category with animal products is to focus on food products. Write to leading manufactures asking if their products contain animal parts and also ask that this information should be clearly mentioned on the label. Add as many signatures as you can to these letters. In a country like India where a large percentage of the population is vegetarian by the religion, and conviction, it is vital to have this information available so that people do not violate their faith unknowingly. Under the law, manufactures are obliged to respond, as this is part of your right as a consumer.

Put together a list of common items that contain animal ingredients and circulate it to societies, temples, animal welfare groups, schools, and so on. If you can make an attractive poster of this list, you can ask shops to display it in the store.

Involve the media in this campaign. Distribute the list to newspapers, magazines and television stations. Find sympathetic media people who will cover the issue. Continue to write letters to the media on the subject. Target women's magazines for detailed coverage of information about milk, baby food, and parenting.

Meet with retailers' associations and request that since products do not carry labels, shops should have separate vegetarian and non-vegetarian sections or stickers to mark products. Provide them copies of list of non-vegetarian items. When retailers respond positively, give them positive reinforcement by doing business there and encouraging others to shop there as well.

Publicize alternatives to non-vegetarian products and manufactures within that products' category whose products do not contain animal parts.

When eating out, be sure to inform the management that you are vegetarian or vegan. Point out if the vegetarian section is inadequate. If you are vegan, carefully explain to the waiter that in addition to refraining from meat and eggs, you also do not want any cream, yogurt, butter, ghee, or cheese either in or on your food. Since the avoidance of dairy products is relatively new in India, you will need to stress the point to avoid mix-ups from force of habit. Always confirm the vegetarian-ness of the dish before ordering and again before consuming.

FINAL THOUGHTS, IDEAS & PERSPECTIVES ABOUT AHIMSA

Human beings are the most vicious and dangerous species on this earth. Other catastrophes that cause upheaval and violence include fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, dust storms, lighting strikes, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, epidemics, land and mud slides—these are acts of nature and not done by the hand of a god or omnipotent superpower.

Non-human species (one to five-sensed being) basically cause himsa for when seeking food for their own needs, but do very little violence for other purposes.

In contrast, and by choice, human beings are the most vicious and destructive species on this planet. Himsa by human beings is mostly intentional and most devastating in scope. These actions encompass war, personal and domestic violence, terrorism, border and land disputes, human trafficking and slavery, environmental and ecological destruction, for sport, entertainment, business, food, medicine, and clothing, actions to serve power, ego, greed, anger, religious supremacy, to assert control and just for fun.

Himsa by human beings is most heinous in nature; newer forms of himsa are invented every day and it keeps on increasing in scope and size, but most of it is controllable and avoidable.

HIMSA COMMITTED BY A HUMAN AGENT

ACTION	HUMAN HARMED?	NON-HUMAN HARMED?
To enslave	Yes	Yes
Torture	Yes	Yes
Human trafficking	Yes	Yes
Vivisection in medical and other scientific training	Yes	Yes
Labor	Yes	Yes
Prostitution and sexual assault	Yes	Yes
Capital punishment	Yes	Yes
Legal penalties; prisons	Yes	Yes
Agriculture	Yes	Yes
Discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, or other factors	Yes	No
Religious and cultural customs and celebrations	Yes	Yes
Genocide	Yes	Yes
For food	No	Yes
For transport of goods	Some	Yes
For medicines	No	Yes
For beauty aids	No	Yes
For furnishings and decorations	No	Yes
For clothing	No	Yes
For testing of machines, chemicals	No	Yes
Hunting	No	Yes
For recreation and entertainment	Some	Yes
In wars and battles	Yes	Yes
Ingredients in food and chemicals	No	Yes
In damage to the environment	Yes	Yes
Rodeo, cock and dog fighting, bull runs	No	Yes
In the circus	Yes	Yes

Human species are responsible for most of the large-scale himsa that is committed each day.

In the United States, today, Americans eat one million animals per hour every day.

Human actions have led to the extinction of mass numbers of species.

GANDHI'S QUOTES ON JAINISM AND NONVIOLENCE

“No religion of the world has explained the principle of non-violence so deeply and systematically, with its applicability in life as in Jainism...Bhagwan Mahaveer is sure to be respected as the greatest authority on non-violence.”

“I say with conviction that the doctrine for which the name of Lord Mahavir is glorified nowadays is the doctrine of Ahimsa. If anyone has practiced to the fullest extent and has propagated most the doctrine of Ahimsa, it was Lord Mahavira.”

On vivisection: “In trying to cure a body of its disease, the medical science has totally disregarded the claims of the sub-human condition. Man, instead of being the lord, and, therefore, the protector of the lower animal kingdom, has become its tyrant. Vivisection is the blackest of all the blackest crimes that man is committing against God and his creation. We should refuse to live if the price of living be the torture of certain beings. It ill becomes us to invoke the blessings of God, the compassionate, if in turn we will not practice compassion towards our fellow creatures.”

US GRADUATING VETERINARIANS INCLUDE NOTION OF AHIMSA IN REVISED GRADUATION OATH

“Some serious good news for animals this holiday season (December 2010): we’ve made a little bit of progress on behalf of animals in the United States. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) last week announced the addition of the words ‘animal welfare’ in the oath taken by new veterinarian graduates.

The concept of animal welfare is not new, but recognition by an organization that represents US veterinarians is a huge step forward for animals. The revised oath is as follows with the additions in italics:

“Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge. I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics. I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.”

Animal welfare can be defined as not just the physical but the mental well-being of non-humans. Concern for a creature’s psychological well-being implies recognition that an animal is a sentient being with feelings of pain, pleasure, joy, sadness, fear—all emotions. Before the 19th century, the idea of animals having emotions wasn’t considered very much.

The semantics may seem minor but the implication is major. AVMA Executive Board Chair, John R. Brooks issued a statement. “The message is we as the AVMA and veterinarians in general do recognize that protecting animal well-being is what we’re all about,” Brooks says.

Dr. J. Bruce Nixon, chairman-elect of the AVMA’s Animal Welfare Commission said ‘From today forward, every graduate entering our profession will swear an oath not only to protect animal health but also welfare; to not only relieve animal suffering but to prevent it. That’s a powerful statement defining ourselves and our responsibilities, not a vague symbol.’

Change is an inevitable part of human existence. While it often comes at a pace slightly faster than the state of inertia, the revised oath is a beginning for animal welfare advocates.”

“Jain Practice of Ahimsa,” by Prof. Gary Francione

“For Jains, Ahimsa is the supreme principle, and yet we use dairy products such as milk, Ghee and sweet not only in our home but also in our temple rituals and religious (Swāmivātslyā and Pārṇā) dinner.

A cow is a five-sensed (Panchendriya) animal that also possesses mind. Cruelty to five-sensed animals is considered the highest sin as compared to the cruelty to vegetables and fewer sensed insects. As per our scriptures, a person is destined to suffer in the hell who hurts five-sensed animals. In this situation a person acquires following sinful karma:

Narak Āyushya Karma (Future birth in Hell)—‘Panchendriya Vadha, Mahā-ārambha, Mahā-parigraha, and Raudra parināmathi Narak Āyushya Bandhāya chhe.’—Jain Darshan by Muni Shri Nyāya Vijayji

Adattādāna Karma (Suffering karma due to stealing) - We are responsible for stealing the cows’ milk without her permission

Antarāya karma (Suffering karma due to forceful separation) —We are responsible for forcefully separating the mother and child.”

According to the New York Times, there are now more than six million Americans (just about equal to or more than the population of all the Jains in world) who are vegan, who do not use any animal products, including dairy products such as milk, cheese, ice-cream, butter, or wear leather shoes or silk garments.

About ten to fifteen percent of Jain youth who attend the YJA and YJP conventions are also vegan. No Jain youth in America has denied the cruelty that exists in the American dairy industry, or, in fact in dairy industries all around the world. However, there is still a significant resistance among the Jain adult population in America, India and the other countries. The only argument they provide that we do not kill the cow during milking operation.

For meat production, the cows are killed immediately. For milk production, the cows are tortured for four years and

during this time their male babies are killed, and then they are slaughtered after four to five years of their productive life. From a cruelty point of view, what is the difference between milk and meat production in this current situation? The dairy cow has no chance to live her natural life. Please reflect on this.

We earnestly request to the Jain community at large to study the subject from a cruelty point of view. Significant literature is available on the Internet and in bookstores worldwide; additionally, the JAINA Education Committee can provide some help to you.

I give great reverence to Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and Pramodaben for their total dedication to practice a vegan lifestyle and spread the message of true Jain non-violence, not only in America but throughout the world. I hope that the other Jain scholars study this subject rationally from the cruelty of Panchendriya and animals' point of view. Hats off to Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and Pramodaben.

Hats off to several million vegan Americans.

Hats off to our vegan Jain youth”.

“The Startling Effects of Going Vegetarian for Just One Day,” by Kathy Freston, on The Huffington Post, posted April, 2009.

“Sometimes, solutions to the world’s biggest problems are right in front of us. The following statistics are eye-opening, to say the least.

I’ve written extensively on the consequences of eating meat –on our health, our sense of ‘right living,’ and on the environment. It is one of those daily practices that have such a broad and deep effect that I think it merits looking at over and over again, from all the different perspectives. Sometimes, solutions to the world’s biggest problems are right in front of us. The following statistics are eye-opening, to say the least.

If everyone went vegetarian just for one day, the U.S. would save:

- o 100 billion gallons of water, enough to supply all the homes in New England for almost 4 months;
- o 1.5 billion pounds of crops otherwise fed to livestock, enough to feed the state of New Mexico for more than a year;
- o 70 million gallons of gas—enough to fuel all the cars of Canada and Mexico combined with plenty to spare;
- o 3 million acres of land, an area more than twice the size of Delaware;
- o 33 tons of antibiotics.

If everyone went vegetarian just for one day, the US would prevent:

- o Greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 1.2 million tons of CO₂, as much as produced by all of France;
- o 3 million tons of soil erosion and \$70 million in resulting economic damages;
- o 4.5 million tons of animal excrement;
- o Almost 7 tons of ammonia emissions, a major air pollutant.

My favorite statistic is this: According to Environmental Defense, if every American skipped one meal of chicken per week and substituted vegetarian foods instead, the carbon dioxide savings would be the same as taking more than half a million cars off of U.S. roads. See how easy it is to make an impact?”

Other points:

Globally, we feed 756 million tons of grain to farmed animals. As Princeton bioethicist Peter Singer notes in his new book, if we fed that grain to the 1.4 billion people who are living in abject poverty, each of them would be provided more than

half a ton of grain, or about 3 pounds of grain/day—that's twice the grain they would need to survive. And that doesn't even include the 225 million tons of soy that are produced every year, almost all of which is fed to farmed animals". He further writes **"The Treatment of Cows in India"**

The treatment of the majority of cows in India is the worst, for many areas of their life cycle. Only less than one percent of cows get sheltered in animal shelter places called Pānjarā-poles. Hence more animal shelters will not solve the problem.

The only rational solution to the problem is to eliminate the root cause of the problem. Eliminate the dairy products from our diets and religious rituals. Once the demand is reduced, the supply will be reduced and in turn fewer cows will be produced by dairy farmers, and hence less cruelty in the world. This will also greatly help our environment. If we consider carbon emissions, animal food contributes about 55% to the environment, while cars and other equipment contribute the remaining 45% of the problem to the environment.

Please reflect seriously on our religious practices under the current environment. Do not follow the scriptures blindly, otherwise our supreme ideal of nonviolence will not have any meaningful value attached to it. America is a land where we can practice our religion rationally. Our children will practice our religion rationally but we will miss the opportunity if we do not wake up."

Original article (see below) by Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, a Cabinet Minister in India , dated April 9, 2013. This was published widely across India.

"I was born a Sikh but have always felt Jain. It takes a million rebirths to be lucky enough to be born a Jain. That is why I feel upset when I see a Jain eating meat, running a leather, mining, bone china or gelatin industry, buying silk, drinking milk or buying Tirathankar statues on auction so that he/she can put their name in a Jain temple.

More than any other religion, Jainism believes implicitly in the law of karma. As you do, so shall you be done by. The lack of knowledge about one's actions – a child stamping on an ant, for instance does not absolve you. Positive, beneficial actions reap their own benefits. Negative hurt and pain causing ones have their own reactions. One does not cancel out the other, each has an impact on what will happen to you. The worst karmic defilement of the soul takes place when one causes hurt to any other creature. Mahavir's words—'You are that which you intend to hit, injure, insult, torment, persecute, torture, enslave or kill.'

Jain Dharma sees the whole universe as a great cosmic mechanism and humans as part of that mechanism must conduct ourselves in harmony and rhythm with it. Anything said or done in this world is echoed back with the same intensity. One could even say that the global ecological crisis that is threatening the entire human race is the consequence of echoing back our own negative thoughts, words and actions.

Each being is a vital thread in another's life tapestry and our lives are woven together for a reason—to survive and be happy. Everything works according to its nature. But humans live out of sync with the mechanism when we go against our qualities of love, kindness and friendship for all living beings. When we forget how so many invisible lives have made our single day livable and comfortable then we imperil our own lives.

If we make the right choices we will get the right consequences. Lord Mahavir says:

'One who neglects or disregards the existence Of earth, water, fire, air, vegetation and all other lives Disregards his own existence Which is entwined with them.'

The best way to see that negative actions are kept to a minimum is to think through your actions and see if they are necessary to your existence. If you understand that each shoe, wallet, steak or diamond will cost you several more rebirths in very difficult conditions, would you do it?

Ahimsa means non-injury. Jains consider nonviolence to be the most essential duty for everyone (ahinsā paramo dharmah.). It is an indispensable condition for liberation from the cycle of reincarnation, the ultimate goal of Jainism. According to Jainism every act by which a person directly or indirectly supports killing or injury is violence (himsa), which creates harmful karma. The aim of ahimsa is to prevent the accumulation of such karma. Jains share this goal with Hindus and Buddhists, but their approach is particularly comprehensive. Their scrupulous and thorough way of applying nonviolence to everyday activities and food shapes their lives and is the most significant hallmark of Jain identity.

The perfect Jain goes out of his way so as not to hurt even small insects and other tiny animals, because harm caused by carelessness is as reprehensible as harm caused by deliberate action.

Jain vegetarianism is the best way to lessen evil. It is not just a matter of not eating meat. It is eating less, eating your last meal before sunset, eating while sharing, eating that which is in season and local. This discipline and thoughtfulness about food should extend to all areas of one's life. To me it means the training of the body and mind to appreciate everything – want nothing.

An ideal Jain would live on fruit and those vegetables that are taken from a plant without killing it – peas, tomatoes for instance or vegetables that come only for a short season. Rice and wheat are both fruit that come at the end of the plant's cycle. In the instructions for preventing unnecessary violence against plants, are injunctions against root vegetables such as potatoes, onions, roots and tubers, because tiny life forms are injured when the plant is pulled up and because the bulb is seen as a living being, as it is able to sprout. Honey is forbidden, as its collection is violence against bees. Cooking or eating at night is discouraged because insects are attracted to the lamps or fire at night.

Jains believe that animals, plants, human beings contain living souls. Each soul is of equal value and should be treated with respect and compassion.

To injure any living being in one's thought, speech, or action constitutes violence, or Hinsa. The monk is enjoined not to commit violence against any living being, including those with one sense (Ekendiryas) and that are immobile (Sthavar), such as plants or those organisms that have earth, water, fire, or air as bodies. Lay Jains are forbidden from Himsa against all mobile beings (Trasa), whether they have two (Dwindriya), three (Trindriya), four (Chaturindriya), or five (Panchendriya) senses (all mammals, birds, and fish). That is why Jains who drink milk are unacceptable as Jains. The production of milk demands major violence on cows. None of them 'give' milk to you. You put her in a stall to stand for 24 hours, impregnate her forcibly, and then take the milk away from her baby. Those Jains who buy milk from the market are even worse – because they take part in a system that involves killing of the baby for leather, injecting the cow with painful hormones and then killing her after her milk dries up. Any attempt to rationalize the drinking of milk is impossible.

The government itself says that the largest export of anything in the country is cow leather—27,000 crores worth. There is an inextricable relationship between the meat industry and dairy with as much suffering and death in a glass of milk as in a pound of steak. And the same goes for eggs. Even the person who keeps only one cow must keep that cow pregnant in order to get milk and this means a steady stream of calves. Whenever a calf is separated from its mother, there is tremendous suffering. Similarly, the shearing of sheep for their wool involves unspeakable violence. The animals are frightened and their bodies often cut and injured. Then they are slaughtered. Silk is produced by boiling silk worms alive. Some Jains argue that the use of animal products is traditional. But tradition cannot define human conduct.

Jainism's ethical principles are a matter of rational thought and careful consideration and cannot be lulled into complacency by tradition. There are Jains who say that we cannot live a perfect life so compromises must be made. Jainism recognizes that we cannot avoid all violence, which is why laypersons are not required to eschew violence to immobile, one-sense organisms. But if inability to avoid all Himsa means that dairy or wool can be used, which involves injury and death on five-sensed beings, then it must mean that flesh can be eaten as well. Some Jains claim that it is not certain that it is wrong to consume dairy or use wool. If we accept this reasoning, then we can be used to say that there are no absolute moral truths – including the basic truth of Ahimsa and the prohibition against eating flesh. Some argue that it is inconvenient to be vegan. Then why be Jain? Considerations of convenience negate the religion itself. Both Svetambara and Digambara are clear and in agreement that suffering and death imposed on mobile beings is unacceptable. Jainism takes Ahimsa very seriously.

Abstinence from killing other animals must be observed by thought, word and deed—Mana, Vachana and Kaya. The discipline imposed is purity of thought, word and deed. It is not enough if one abstains from inflicting pain on other beings; If you approve of such conduct in others, that approval makes you responsible for the cruelty of killing practiced by others. Do not kill nor kill through an agent nor approve the evil deed. Since Jains are basically business people, look at the industry you run and evaluate the suffering it causes. Is it worth another thousand lives?"

We are all part of one family; our actions connect and influence the lives of all of our family members".

Paul Graham of Las Vegas writes "All animals are living, breathing, conscious beings. Those raised for food are routinely enslaved, exploited, tortured, and killed. The same thing happens to animals on fur farms and in laboratories. Society has used and abused animals for centuries for all sorts

of reasons, but none of which can be considered morally justifiable. There is nothing ethical about the imprisonment and murder of a sentient being. Meat and dairy not only contributes to animal abuse, but hurts humans as well”.

H.H Dalai Lama on November 22, 2014 at Hindu conference in India

Dalai Lama credited India for all the knowledge that Tibet and Buddhists have, but said, “Ancient India was our guru. Not modern India, it is too westernized ... It is not enough to carry on puja and rituals. This nation produced great thinkers. Now in every corner there is a temple. But places where one can think or discuss are rare. India should remember and reinforce its great tradition of tolerance and religious harmony and think about why it has more temples than centers of learning. He also said India should aim to form “India Towns” across the world where they must open culture centers instead of temples and “talk about ahimsa and religious harmony”.

It is my unshakable belief
that India's destiny is to
deliver the message
of nonviolence
to mankind.

M. K. Gandhi

MAHATMA, Vol. 4, p. 4

