



# ***Being Jain and Living Green: 101***

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## Overview

- In this session we will examine two key Jain principals:
  - Vegetarianism
  - Non-Possessiveness





## *We Live in a Interconnected World*

- Mahavir made the following profound statements:
  - “All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence.”
  - “We harm and kill other lives because of our greed and possessiveness” (Tattvartha Sutra)
- Since all lives are interconnected one should realized that ‘if we harm ONE we harm ALL living beings and “Possession and possessiveness is the primary cause of all violence as well as imbalance in the environment”



## *We Live in a Interconnected World*

- Parasparopagraho Jivanam – All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence





## *We Live in a Interconnected World*

- These ancient statements form the basis of the modern day science of ecology and are refreshingly contemporary in its premise and promise
  - ***Albert Einstein once said, "Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."***



## *2006 United Nations Report*

- “Animal products contribute more to global warming than all land vehicles, ships and airplanes on the planet combined”



## *The Effects of non- vegetarianism*

- Meat is the most uneconomical and inefficient food we can eat:
  - Misuse of grain
  - Misuse of water
  - Misuse of land
  - Misuse of Electricity
  - Misuse of Fossil Fuels
  - Related to World Hunger
  - Unquantifiable healthcare costs



## *Inefficient Use of Food*

- 10 times less efficient
- Nutritional value of 1lb of meat vs 1lb of vegetable based meal provides much more energy and nutrition







## *Meat Eating and World Starvation*

- Harvard nutritionist, Jean Mayer, estimates that reducing meat production by just 10% would release enough grain to feed 60 million people
- “Much Third World grain and other food is fed to animals (to produce cheaper meat to be eaten in developed countries), not to hungry Third World people”
- Greater demand for meat leads to more deforestation, more water pollution, more soil degradation, and, ultimately, more hunger



## *Land Degradation*



- Livestock sector is largest use of land
  - Accounts for 70% of all agriculture land
  - 30% of the land surface of the planet
  - 70% of Amazon rainforest is occupied by pastures
  - 1/2 of total topsoil has been destroyed – 85% is result of livestock production



## *Water Usage*

- 2,500 gallons of water to produce 1lb of beef
- 80% of our nation's use of water goes to livestock production
- Quarter pounder – more water than a human drinks in 4 years

## *Meat Eating and Water pollution*

- Meat production far outstrips all other causes of pollution nationwide and worldwide combined
- A steer produces 50 lbs of manure a day – a total of one billion tons of “organic waste”





## *Meat Eating and Water pollution*

- In US, livestock are responsible for an estimated 55% of erosion and sediment, 37% of pesticide use, 50% of antibiotic use, and 1/3 of the phosphorus and nitrogen into water sources.



## *Meat Eating and Atmosphere*

- Livestock sector contributes more to global warming than all transportation combined
  - 9% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
  - 37% of methane (23x more GWP)
  - 65% of NOX (296x more GWP)
  - 64% of Ammonia – acid rain



## ***Shocking Facts!***

- 80-90% of all grain grown in America is used to feed meat animals
- 1 acre used to raise a steer will provide about one pound of protein – this same land planted with soybeans will produce 17 lbs of protein from grains
- Former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim has said that the food consumption of the rich countries is the key cause of the hunger around the world and the UN has strongly recommended that these countries cut down on their meat consumption
- Scientists at the University of Chicago showed that a typical American meat-eater is responsible for nearly 1.5 tons more carbon dioxide a year than a vegan.



## *Historical figures*

- Socrates had figured this out 2500 years ago:
- “If we pursue our habit of eating animals, and if our neighbor follows a similar path, will we not have need to go to war against our neighbor to secure greater pasturage, because ours will not be enough to sustain us, and our neighbor will have a similar need to wage war on us for the same reason? “





## *The Effects of Possessiveness*

- Possessiveness is violence: Why – there is violence in everything we buy and consume: our cars, homes, furniture, clothes, electronics, etc.
- Let us examine the full impact of expenditure and consumption on the world around us...



# *The Effects of Possessiveness*

- Two main things to understand:
  - Interconnectivity – ‘if we harm ONE, we harm ALL living beings’
  - Consumerism – egregious over consumption and it’s unsustainability



## *Jainism on Possessiveness*

- “Possession and possessiveness is the primary cause of all violence as well as imbalance in the environment” – Lord Mahavir
- Articles needed for life do not constitute possessiveness; ‘attachment is possessiveness’ – Lord Mahavir



## *Gandhi summarized this well:*

- The idea of non-possessiveness stems from respect for other lives and the environment.
- "Live simply so others may simply live" – Gandhiji

# *The Story of Stuff*

- An examination of the full scale – where stuff comes from and where it goes. In particular we should understand how everything interacts, how everything is interrelated





## *The Story of Stuff – Consumption*

- The bottom line is we are consuming too much – too fast – with disregard to the environment and unsustainability of our voracious consumption
  - In the last 30 years, 1/3 of natural resource space has been consumed – wasted away through cutting, mining, hauling
  - In the US just less than 4% of the forests remain
  - 40% of the US water has become undrinkable



## *The Story of Stuff – Consumption*

- In the United States we consume far too much
  - The US accounts for just 5% of the world population, but use 30% of the world resources
  - 30% of the world's waste
  - If everybody in the world consumed at the US's pace, we would need 3-5 planets to sustain the population



## *The Story of Stuff – Exploitation*

- So then what do we do – we go to the third world and exploit their resources
  - 75% of the world's fisheries are gone
  - 80% of the world's forests are gone – 2000 trees a minute in the Amazon





## *The Story of Stuff – Exploitation*

- Toxins:
  - 100,000 synthetic chemicals used
  - Toxins go up the food chain – Highest concentration at the top



# *The Story of Stuff – Exploitation*

- **Factory Workers:**
  - They are exploited –land and resources –forced them to sustain themselves by coming to factories to work – they have no other options
  - Erosion of local economies in 3rd world – their environments don't sustain them anymore
  - So it's not just resources, it's people too



## *The Story of Stuff – Pollution*

- Pollution:
  - In the US – 4 billion pounds of toxic chemicals – from factories – that's what they admit to – so could be a lot more
- Exploitation of people and resources is what makes it possible to get products so cheaply



## *The Story of Stuff – Consumption*

- Our economy runs on consumption
- Our value is thus demonstrated by how much we consume
- Material must flow
- % in product or use in six months
- Victor Lebow - CONSUME



# *The Story of Stuff – Consumption*

- Just how egregious is it?
  - Compared to an Indian? Brazilian?
  - Compared to 50 years ago



# *The Story of Stuff – Consumption*

- A way of life
  - How did it happen
  - Planned Obsolescence
  - Perceived Obsolescence
- Advertisements
  - We are bombarded
  - How it affects the way we feel and perceive
  - Shopping in our free time



## *The Story of Stuff – Disposal*

- What happens to stuff
  - Where does garbage go
  - Pollutes the air, land and water
  - How much garbage – per day – per year
  - Incineration – DIOXIN



## *The Story of Stuff – Disposal*

- Recycling – the real story
- Downstream garbage – is 70x!





## *The Solution*

- There is no real solutions – they are all insignificant in comparison
- The only solution is.....
- NON-POSSESSIVENESS