

VEGETARIANISM:

FOR YOUR BODY, YOUR MIND,
YOUR SOUL AND YOUR PLANET

H. H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji

VEGETARIANISM

For Our Bodies, Our Minds,
Our Souls & Our Planet

By

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Swami Chidanand Saraswati, 2002

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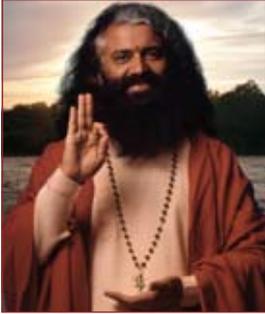
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Blessings From Pujya Swamiji

Dear Divine Souls,

This book on vegetarianism has been prepared as an offering – an offering to the values of peace, non-violence, compassion and environmental preservation.

In today's day and age, we are faced daily with vivid and disturbing news reports of starvation, environmental destruction, global warming, irreversible pollution and the untold suffering of billions of our brothers and sisters around the world.

In 2006, the United Nations prepared a report titled “Livestock's Long Shadow” in which it made a clear and convincing case that in order to minimize global warming, we should focus less on our minimal contributions through our cars and water usage, and more on our enormous contribution through the food we eat.

It is becoming clearer that vegetarianism is one of the main and irrefutable aspects of living a *dharmic* life – regardless of our religious or cultural backgrounds.

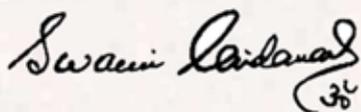
I believe, fervently, that the human race is made up of good people who want to lead good lives. The mistakes we make



are usually made due to ignorance and confusion. If that ignorance and confusion can be eliminated, I believe that humans will generally make choices for the betterment of not only themselves but for the planet and their fellow brothers and sisters.

I pray that this book may serve as a guide for eliminating any ignorance and confusion regarding the truly crucial role our food choices play in the preservation of our species and our planet.

With love and blessings to you all,
In the service of God and humanity,



Swami Chidanand Saraswati

*Note: The UN report can be downloaded as a PDF document in part or in its entirety from
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM> or email us at
ibrf@ibrf.com and we'd be happy to email you a copy.*



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Foreword

At the age of fifteen, I sat in the home of a close friend in a small, quaint village in Northern France, where I periodically spent my Christmas holidays. We gathered around a long, mahogany dining table elegantly decorated for the Christmas Eve meal. Our plates were lined with three different forks, four different spoons and two knives – each course would require its own cutlery.

From the kitchen came the piping hot meal, and my friend's mother gingerly placed a fresh roasted quail on each plate. The quail had been tenderly tied in thin string which bound its small body tightly, and the string was tied in a knot over the bird's chest. "Use this knife to cut the string," my friend instructed me, pointing to the delicate, sharp knife on the side of my plate. I suddenly was nauseous. It was as though someone had come and ripped – like a band-aid which had become stuck after too long – the veil off of my eyes. I had to untie my food before eating it? The illusion that meat was food was suddenly dispelled as drastically as if someone quickly turned on the floodlights in a previously dark room. How could this creature which now had to be freed from its ropes be my dinner? How could anyone even imagine it?

I knew, as I sat there folding and unfolding the cloth napkin on my lap, that not only could I not eat this dinner, but that I could never again eat the flesh of a living creature.

The decision to be vegetarian was, to me, as visceral as the decision anyone would make to refuse the dead, bloody body of a child killed in a concentration camp. Would anyone, possibly, ever

consider feasting on the body of a child who had been chained to its bed, tortured, kept under blazing lights twenty-four hours a day, and eventually skinned alive? Could we even imagine it? Of course not. Yet, every time we eat a hamburger, we do the exact same thing. The only difference is that the mother of that child is a cow, not a human.

I have, by the grace of God, never missed the taste of meat since the moment I made the decision to become vegetarian. In fact, I cannot even eat many of the meat substitutes made out of soy or gluten because the texture feels too much like meat in my mouth. My teeth automatically rebel against the idea of grinding or gnawing on such foods. If it even *feels* like meat, I cannot eat it.

As we go through life, trying to make our way on this frequently confusing and elusive path of spirituality, one of the primary aspects I have found is integrity. We should never engage in any act which makes us feel ashamed or which lowers us in our own eyes. No matter how many hours of *japa* I do, or how deep my meditation is, I do not feel right inside if I have acted against my conscience. To be truly spiritual we must be able to look at each minute and each moment of our lives and know that we have acted in accordance with truth, with morality, with integrity and with righteousness. Of course, even with the best of intentions, we all make mistakes, and it is God's grace that He is infinitely forgiving of our weaknesses and our ignorance.

But in my opinion, to eat meat is not a mistake of weakness, passion or ignorance. It is a mistake of blindly, yet consciously and deliberately, choosing to satisfy our sensual pleasures at the expense of other living beings. By eating meat we not only kill the animal who is now on our plate, but we are also responsible for the death of children who are malnourished and starving across the world. We would never take a piece of bread out of

the hands of a starving child. Yet every time we eat meat, that is exactly what we are doing. By feeding the grain to livestock instead of people, we are imposing poverty, illness and starvation upon our brothers and sisters across the world. If we eat meat, we are also responsible for the death of all the animal species that live in the forests which are cut down for grazing. These animals are killed as their homes are cut down, or they die shortly thereafter due to lack of food and shelter. We are also responsible for the deaths of all the animals who are killed merely as collateral damage of meat production (whether it's dolphins killed in tuna nets or male chicks suffocated to death for their "uselessness" in the eyes of the egg industry).

How can we consider ourselves spiritual people or even good people with that much blood on our hands?

The first edition of this book was aimed primarily at Westerners. Indians were, I believed, vegetarian by nature. Yet, *Newsweek* magazine published a study in 2007 that found that the number of chicken-eaters in India had doubled since the year 2000! In a mere seven years, the numbers of non-vegetarians in India doubled! For that reason, we have realized the compelling need to disseminate this information amongst the Indian community.

In this booklet you will find innumerable compelling reasons to become vegetarian. The reasons are ethical, spiritual, moral, environmental, scientific and universal. None of the reasons given by Pujya Swamiji rests on a particular religion or theology. He relies in this booklet on reasons which apply to everyone – regardless of one's religious, cultural or spiritual beliefs.

Pujya Swamiji's reasons are universal and applicable to all. His reasons tug at the very strings of our humanity. Throughout this booklet you will learn the detrimental effects of eating meat on not only your own health, but also on the health of our planet

and on the health of all the people and other species with whom we share it.

Throughout this booklet, Pujya Swamiji explains how being a vegetarian is the only possible choice for people who care about themselves, their environment and their fellow brothers and sisters living in poverty across the world.

Sadhvi Bhagawati
Rishikesh, India

Introduction

“Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar.”

We make many choices in our lives without ever questioning why – choices like what religion we believe in, what our values are, and what we eat. Perhaps we simply continue to live in the way we were raised, automatically adopting our parents’ choices. Or perhaps we rebel against how we were raised – our parents made one choice, so we will make the opposite. In either case, we rarely take the time to truly see why we are living the way we do.

In this booklet, I want to take the opportunity to see why one of the most important choices we can make in life is what we eat. Do we choose to live as vegetarians or as meat-eaters? I want to talk about the deep meaning behind the choices we make – for ourselves, for our children and for our planet – each time we put food in our bodies.

So many Indian youth come to Pujya Swamiji and say, “But my parents can’t even give me a good reason to be vegetarian. They just say that the cow is holy. But if I don’t believe the cow is holy, then why can’t I eat hamburgers?”

The importance of vegetarianism far transcends a belief that the cow is holy. Although the importance of being vegetarian is more urgent than it was thousands of years ago, the reasons *why* have changed significantly over the last century. Some of the

reasons are the same today as when our scriptures were written thousands of years ago, but many of the reasons are directly related to the world we live in now. While vegetarianism has always been a correct moral and spiritual choice, today it is even more than that.

Today it is an imperative choice for anyone who cares about their personal health and about the health of Mother Earth and all the people who live here. Today, it is not simply a religious decision. Rather, it is the only way we can hope to eliminate hunger, thirst, rainforest destruction and the loss of precious resources. It is, in short, the most important thing that each man, woman and child can do every day to demonstrate care for the Earth and care for humanity.

In this booklet I address a few of the main reasons why being a vegetarian is the only possible choice for anyone who is concerned about living honestly, peacefully and *dharmically* in the present and about preserving a world for tomorrow. I have been very impressed with the response to the first printing of this booklet. I've heard that an entire monastery of 160 monks in Nepal was converted to vegetarianism through one divine woman who – while she lived in their monastery – xeroxed photocopies of this booklet for all of them.

So many people have written telling us that either they personally have become vegetarian or that they have converted others to vegetarianism through the message in this booklet. This means that you can do it! Read this book not only for yourself, but also for all those you know. Share it, distribute it, talk about it. Help bring the path of vegetarianism to as many of your friends and family as possible. This is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your loved ones and to our Mother Earth.

Section I:

Spiritual Aspects of Vegetarianism

Chapter 1: *Ahimsa*

Chapter 2: Integrity & Honesty

Chapter 3: The Taste of Fear

*“The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its
animals are treated.”*

– Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter 1: Ahimsa

“The life of an animal in a factory farm is characterized by acute deprivation, stress and disease. Hundreds of millions of animals are forced to live in cages or crates barely larger than their own bodies. Unable to groom, stretch their legs, or even turn around, the victims of factory farms exist in a relentless state of distress.” – Humane Farming Association

One of the most important guiding principles of a moral life is *ahimsa*, or non-violence. There is hardly anything more violent than taking the life of another for our mere enjoyment. If we cannot give life to others (other than one or two children through procreation), then how can we take the life of another? If we cannot give life, then we have no right to take life. It would be different if we were stranded in the jungle, starving to death, and we needed the food temporarily to survive. But, we live in a world where we can get all our calories, all our vitamins and minerals in other, less violent and less expensive ways. Hence, to continue to kill the animals is simply to fulfill our desires and our pleasures. It is simply selfish gratification at the incredible pain of another.

More violent than their day of death are the numerous days of

*Even more violent than their death
are the numerous days of their lives.*

Every minute, 14,000 chickens are killed for consumption in the USA alone.

the lives of these animals whom we eat for dinner. Animals raised for consumption are raised distinctly differently than animals raised as pets.

How are chickens treated before they are killed?

Let's look at chickens. More than 14,000 chickens are killed *every minute* in the USA for our consumption, totalling over eight billion chickens each year. The life of a chicken is terribly violent – they are crammed together in large warehouses, frequently with as many as 40,000 chickens in one building.

Chickens – like humans – have natural territory and space needs. Yet, these are unmet in chicken “farms.” Rather, these animals are packed together as closely as possible, so closely that they frequently cannot even move. The Department of Agriculture recommends that chickens should have a minimum of two square feet in which to live, but the biggest companies provide a mere 0.55 square feet for their chickens.

To have a true understanding of these conditions, picture yourself in an elevator which is so crowded that you can not even turn around, let alone move. Picture as well, that all the people in the elevator are confused and scared. They do not realize there is no way out. So they cry and bite and kick, in a true frenzy, attempting to free themselves from this claustrophobic terror. Next, imagine that the elevator is tilted, on a slant, so that everyone falls to one side, and it is nearly impossible to move back up. In this elevator, the ceiling is so low that your head is pushed

“The biochemistry of physiological and emotional states (of stress and anxiety, for example) differ little between mice and men.”

– M. Fox, *Returning to Eden*

90% of chickens have cancer at the time they are slaughtered for consumption.

down to your shoulders in order to stand. There is no way to straighten your neck. You are all barefoot on a wire floor that pokes and cuts your feet – ever so sensitive for you are probably only a few months old. Finally, imagine that this terror does not end when someone comes to open the door at the “lobby” floor. Rather, this is your whole life, every minute of every day, until you are fried up and served for dinner, with a side of mashed potatoes. If you can imagine this, you can begin to glimpse the life of a chicken.

The chickens raised to be eaten are fed an extraordinary and unnaturally large amount of food in order to put extra weight on them, thereby increasing profits. The chickens have been bred in such a way that they gain weight faster and faster. In today’s chicken farms, 90% of the chickens are so obese by six weeks of age that they can’t even walk, and 90% of them have the disease *leucosis*, otherwise known as chicken cancer.

Why do they develop cancer and other diseases at such an exorbitant rate? One reason may be their diet. Their manure is routinely recycled back into their feed and their water is frequently the liquid waste from manure pits.

The Turkey

300 million turkeys are raised and killed in the USA alone each year for consumption. The turkeys we eat are an incredible

“Every particle of factual evidence supports the contention that the higher mammalian vertebrates experience pain sensations as acute as our own... their nervous systems are almost identical to ours and their reactions to pain are remarkably similar.”

– Richard Serjeant, *The Spectrum of Pain*

example of man upsetting the laws of nature. The turkeys are not only kept in despicable conditions paralleling those of the chickens, but they are also fed such an inordinate amount of food and are bred to be so fat that they cannot even mate. The turkey industry earns dollars for each pound of meat they sell, so it is in their best interest to make each turkey as many pounds as possible. Thus, they are bred and raised to be so fat that the male and female turkey cannot get close enough to each other in order to procreate. Therefore, rather than discontinue their unnatural and harmful practices, the poultry industry has created a special turkey artificial insemination method. Today, 100% of turkeys in the United States and throughout most of the world are conceived through artificial insemination. We have managed even to disrupt some of the most basic laws of nature of survival and procreation.

Where do our pets go when they die?

Additionally, have you ever wondered what happens to the tens of millions of dogs and cats each year who are unclaimed in animal shelters? They are “put to sleep” and then their ground-up bodies are frequently mixed in with the feed for cows, pigs and chickens. Yet, not only are our future hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken nuggets ingesting ground-up dogs and cats, but they are also ingesting the medicine used to euthanize (compassionately kill) these dogs and cats. A medicine that is used to kill animals thereby gets recycled through our food chain and eventually ends up on our plates.

How are cows treated before they are killed?

Veal

Veal is considered a rare delicacy by people across the world. “Tender veal cutlets” are frequently the most expensive item on

a menu. Yet, when we look at the way in which these animals become so tender and white, we realize that the true price of this dish is far more than what the restaurant charges.

Veal is the meat from baby cows who are separated from their mothers immediately at birth. Cows, as milk-giving/breast-feeding mammals, have very strong maternal instincts. It is not a simple coincidence that Hindus worship the cow as mother. A mother cow will keep her calf next to her long after he is born, nursing him, looking after him, protecting him, and teaching him to fend for himself. A typical calf will nurse at his mother's breast for eight months after birth. However, in the meat industry, these baby cows are wrested from their mothers less than twenty-four hours after birth. Why?

First, the dairy industry doesn't want the cows to suckle at their mother's breast, thereby drinking precious profits. It is much cheaper to feed the newborn liquid formula. Second, it is essential that the babies do not develop any muscle. If they stand near their mothers, suckling at the breast, their legs will develop muscle. Muscle is hard; fat is soft and juicy. Fat is tender. So, the only way to prevent muscle is to prevent the use of their limbs.

I have heard from people who have visited these places that – contrary to what the meat industry would like you to believe – the mother and baby cows cry in agony for hours after being separated. In fact, there are numerous stories of mother cows walking dozens of miles to find their babies.

But, these newborn baby cows, screaming for the warmth of

“Which God has given, let not man take away. For I tell you truly, he who kills himself and he who eats the flesh of slain beasts, eats the body of death.”

– Jesus, as quoted in *The Essene Gospel of Peace*

their mother's breast, are chained into restraining stalls. Ninety percent of baby calves are taken from their mothers less than twenty-four hours after birth.

Additionally, people prefer "white" meat to "dark" meat, so the meat industries do everything they can to ensure that their meat is "white." But, how to make otherwise dark meat white? The best and cheapest way is through ensuring that the calves are kept anemic. Anemic tissue is significantly paler than normal tissue. Therefore, this sought-after "white" meat is actually the meat of anemic calves chained at the neck to stalls which serve as their life-long jail. So, what is the real price of this dish?

Hamburgers and Steak

It is so easy for us to stop by a fast-food restaurant on the way home from school or work and pick up a quick meal. Yet, rarely do we think of the implications to the animals who were tortured and killed for our "quick" meal. Yes, we understand that a hamburger is made of cow, but do we go beyond that? Do we stop and think what that cow's life was like? Do we imagine how it went from being a living, breathing, life-giving creature to the slab of meat on our buns? The violence inherent in a hamburger is much more vast than simply the taking of life. Newborn cows are removed from their mother at birth and chained at the neck into a stall measuring less than 22 inches by 58 inches. This is significantly smaller than if you locked a young cow in the trunk of a tiny, sub-compact car. In these stalls, the babies have neither room to take a step, nor move, nor lie down.

We would perhaps like to believe that animals killed for human

For every three hamburgers you eat, you can assume that at least one cow was alive and conscious while he went through the assembly line of torture to become your lunch.

consumption are killed mercifully and quickly. We'd like to imagine a scenario in which they live a nice, peaceful, healthy few years of life and then are swiftly killed in one quick stroke. Unfortunately, that is not the reality. In 2000 and 2001, national news networks in the USA showed videotapes of the world's largest meat-packing company skinning, dismembering and torturing live, conscious animals. The tapes showed struggling, conscious cows hoisted upside down and butchered. Fully conscious cows were skinned alive, their legs cut off while struggling for freedom. Cows were shown being hit repeatedly with stunning devices that did not work. Other cows were tortured and repeatedly shocked with cattle prods and workers were shown shoving an electric prod into a cow's mouth.

One of the employees of this world's largest slaughterhouse was quoted as saying:

"I estimate that 30% of the cows are not properly stunned [before being skinned and cut up]...I can tell these cows are alive because they're holding their heads up and a lot of times they make noises."

Another worker added, "Workers can open the legs, the stomach, the neck, cut off the feet while the cow is still breathing."

So, if 30% of the cows are still conscious and alive when they are skinned, bled and butchered, that means that for every three hamburgers we eat, we can assume that at least one of the burgers is from a cow who was conscious when he or she went through the assembly line of torture in order to become our lunch or dinner.

A famous meat and chicken company's training video says that there is a 5% acceptable error rate in "stunning" the cows unconscious before death. That means that for every one hundred

cows who are skinned and dismembered, this company considers it acceptable if five are still conscious during the process. However, some sources claim the actual error rate is far higher than 5% and perhaps closer to 30%.

With 90,000 cows killed *every day* in the USA, somewhere between 4,500 and 27,000 cows (depending upon individual companies' error rates) are skinned, bled and cut into pieces while they are still alive, breathing and conscious *every single day*. Can't we say "enough" to this inhumane torture? Must we continue to let animals suffer so mercilessly for our own culinary enjoyment?

How Are Pigs Treated?

Hot Dogs, Pork Chops and Bacon

What about hot dogs and bacon? Does the pork industry do any better? Hardly. More than one hundred million pigs are killed for food each year in the USA alone, killing up to 1,100 pigs *per hour*. Pigs are crammed so tightly together in the farms that they cannot move. Thus, out of sheer frustration, pain and anger, they become violent and frequently bite each others' tails. The industry's solution to this problem is to remove the tails of the pigs. Without anesthesia.

Another videotape was acquired which portrays the truth of the factory farms:

"The videotape depicts sows [female pigs] being beaten with metal rods, kicked, stomped on and dragged, being killed by blows to the head with wrenches and cinder blocks, having their throats cut while fully conscious, being skinned alive and having their legs removed while still alive and moaning."

Couldn't we choose a different item on the menu? Can't we make

a choice for mercy, for non-violence and for compassion?

How Many Animals Are Eaten Each Year?

Each year, sixteen billion animals (not including fish) are killed in the USA alone for our food consumption. If you add the rest of the world, it is significantly more than that. Over sixteen billion animals a year – that is more than the number of people on the planet. We devote millions of dollars in warfare to defending minorities across the world against the threat of genocide. We rally, we protest, we order sanctions and embargoes against governments that engage in the systematic killing of large groups of people. But, who is there to rally for the billions of animals slaughtered mercilessly each year? Who is there to say “enough” to this killing? Let us be the ones to stop this cruel murder.

It would be one thing if we were stranded in the jungle starving to death and we needed the food to survive. But, we live in a world where we can get all our calories, all our vitamins and minerals in other, less violent and less expensive ways. Hence, to continue to kill the animals is simply to fulfill our desires and our pleasures. There is no need or utility in it. It is simply selfish gratification at the incredible pain of another.

The Myth of “Free-Range,” “Cage-Free,” and Organic Meat and Eggs

Today, many people justify the eating of meat by claiming it is from organically-raised and/or free-range animals. They feel that the animals are raised in a good way, being allowed to roam freely and not being forced to take loads of antibiotics and unnatural

Each year, sixteen billion animals (not including fish) are killed mercilessly for our food consumption.

This is more than the total number of people on the planet.

hormones. However, the fair treatment of free-range animals is often an illusion. Aside from the fact that all these animals are living, breathing, feeling creatures who want to live, there are many reasons why eating “free-range,” “cage-free,” or organic meat or eggs is not any better than eating conventionally-raised animals.

Many organic and free-range farms squeeze thousands of animals together into sheds or mud-filled lots, just as factory farms do. While they are not kept in individual cages or pens within these structures, they are still forced to live in cramped conditions for their entire lives, forced to live in their own filth. “Cage-free” chickens and turkeys are often allowed to “roam free,” as long as they do so within the confines of these sheds. On rare occasions, they are let out for very short periods of time, but only into an outdoor enclosure that is small, cramped, and muddy.

As a result of living their lives in complete squalor, organically-raised and “free-range” animals often suffer from higher mortality rates than non-organic animals, as they are not given any antibiotics to treat the different illnesses they develop. If animals become sick, many farmers will deny them medicine in order to be able to sell the milk, eggs, or meat as organic. For example, “cage-free” chickens often suffer from the same lung lesions and ammonia burns and blisters as hens in cages from sitting on urine- and feces-covered floors. If they are being raised organically, they will never receive medicine for these lesions. Many animals die in these conditions, and their bodies are left for long periods with the living animals as the sheds are rarely cleaned.

In addition, “free-range,” “cage-free” and organically-raised animals often suffer the same bodily mutilations as animals on factory farms. Because of the crowded conditions, chickens are de-beaked, cows are dehorned and castrated, and pigs have their tails chopped off and rings forced through their sensitive

noses (to keep them from rooting in the ground) – all without painkillers in order to keep them “organic.”

Finally, towards the end of their tragic lives, animals being raised for meat are often force-fed to make them bigger, just as is done on factory farms. Many “organically-raised” cows are sent to factory-farm feedlots in order to be fattened (with organic feed); thus, they are forced to live in the same squalid conditions as regular factory-farmed animals.

The animals that don’t die on these farms are shipped on trucks in all sorts of weather extremes, forced to stand for hours without food or water. They are slaughtered in the same filthy slaughterhouses used by factory farms, where they are often cut apart while still fully conscious. Furthermore, their flesh is then exposed to the same potential bacterial contamination as all “non-organic” meat.

The lives of so-called “free-range,” “cage-free,” and organically-raised animals are no better than conventionally-raised animals. In some cases, like when they develop illnesses from their squalid living conditions, these animals are worse off. It is a complete illusion that these animals are raised in good conditions and live happy lives before their slaughter. The myth surrounding these farming practices is simply that – *myth* – and in no way justifies the eating of meat or eggs coming from these animals.

Chapter 2: Integrity and Honesty

Why is it considered dishonest to eat meat?

Most of us consider ourselves honest people. We like to believe that we do not tell lies. We like to believe that we are righteous, honest people and that we are passing these values onto our children. Yet, if we eat meat, we can not say that we do not tell lies. In fact, our life is a lie. If we wanted to be honest and still eat meat, we would have to go outside, chase down a live cow, and bite right into it. We would have to go to a chicken “farm,” take the animal while it was still alive, tear its head off, pull out its feathers and eat it raw. Of course, we do not do that. Instead, we order a hamburger. We cannot even call it what it is, let alone kill it ourselves. So, we call it “beef,” instead of cow. We call it “pork” instead of pig. We call it “poultry” instead of chicken. Then, we eat it packaged in nice, neat ways that allow us to forget what we are eating.

How many people stop and think that the thing between the tomato and the bread on a hamburger used to be a living, breathing creature? That it was someone’s child? How many of us would eat our cats or dogs between a piece of tomato and a slice

These are lies that are killing our planet, our animals and ourselves.

of bread? We wouldn't. And that is why it is a lie. We cannot even admit to ourselves what we are doing. How then, can we consider ourselves honest people if we are lying every time we eat? These are not lies that only cause misunderstanding; these are not "little white lies." These are lies that are killing our planet, our animals and ourselves.

Chapter 3: The Taste of Fear

Why do I feel anxious, restless and aggressive in my life?

Eating meat is violent not only to the animal whose life we are wresting out, but it is also violent to ourselves and our planet. We will discuss in future chapters about the devastation being wrought on our planet – to the environment and to other, less fortunate people – through our meat consumption, but here I want to talk about a different violence. Let us talk about the relationship between our diet and the rising rates of crime, violence and unrest in the world. When animals (humans included) are threatened, we secrete large amounts of hormones. These numerous hormones are frequently referred to as adrenaline. Their purpose is to prepare our body to fight, to save our lives. Have you ever noticed that when you get scared, a lot of things happen inside you? Your heart beats quickly, your digestion stops, your palms sweat and your physical impulses become very good and sharp. These are the result of the hormones. They prepare us to either fight or run away, and thus are sometimes referred to as the “fight or flight” hormones.

When an animal is about to be killed, its body is flooded with

“To become vegetarian is to step into the stream which leads to Nirvana.”

– The Buddha

these stress hormones which remain in the animals' tissues. When we eat those tissues, we are ingesting those hormones. Thus, our own bodies become flooded with adrenaline and other "fight or flight" chemicals, making us even more prone to simple survival instincts. When we have hormones in our blood that tell us our life is in danger, it is no surprise that we are angry, restless and anxious.

Our world is becoming more violent each day. More and more people are simply out to get ahead, to protect themselves, even at the sake of others. These are the same characteristics that the stress hormones prepare our bodies for. Hence, is it not possible that the increase in these characteristics world-wide is directly a result of our increase in meat consumption and the subsequent ingestion of stress hormones? I think it is.

Every day people come to Pujya Swamiji and complain, "Swamiji, I am restless. I cannot sleep at night. I get angry for no reason. I cannot control my temper." When we ingest hormones that send messages to our body that we are in danger, naturally we will become alert, restless, anxious, and angry. Slowly, over time, these hormones change the very nature of our beings and we become tense, stressed, and uncontrollably angry.

Perhaps, if we treat this temple that is our body as a temple, it will behave and think like a temple. When we treat it like a battleground, how can we wonder that it acts like a battleground?

If we want to reduce the violence and hate in this world as well as live peaceful, calm, centered lives, we should stop flooding our bodies with hormones that create stress, violence and the "fight-or-flight" mentality.

Section II:

Fish and Eggs: The Controversy

- Fish: Health Issues
 - Do Fish Feel Pain?
- Environmental Effects of Fishing on the Ocean
- Are Fish Farms Better for the Environment?
 - Eggs: Are They Vegetarian?
 - Treatment of the Egg-Laying Hen
 - Murder of the “Useless” Roosters
- Seeing A Developing Chick Inside the Egg

Fish

Fish and eggs seem to be the two most controversial issues of vegetarianism. So many people tell me that they are vegetarians; yet they eat eggs or they eat fish.

There are several issues with eating fish: personal health issues, environmental issues, and the issue of pain felt by the fish themselves.

Health Issues: Toxicity and Poisoning

Tragically, our oceans and lakes are the greatest storehouses of waste in the world. Unable or unwilling to develop adequate alternative sources of disposal, many communities around the world resort to dumping their waste into the water, misled perhaps by the “out of sight, out of mind” concept.

Even developed and developing nations frequently dump large quantities of toxic and otherwise hazardous waste into their waterways. Fish flesh is particularly adept at storing contaminants in its tissues. Further, as everyone learns in basic biology classes, the food chain in our oceans and lakes is simple: small fish feast on that which floats in the water, falls to the river bottom, or gets caught by coral reefs; medium-sized fish eat the smaller fish; large fish eat the medium-sized fish; and humans typically eat the large fish.

Therefore, by the time the flesh is ingested by humans, it is a veritable storehouse of toxins and chemicals. Fish flesh absorbs and retains contaminants, such as PCBs, which cause damage to the liver and other organs as well as to the entire nervous system. The flesh frequently contains dioxins, which are linked to cancer, in addition to radioactive substances and other dangerous toxins such as cadmium, mercury, lead, chromium, and arsenic. These toxins have been shown conclusively to cause a wide range of ailments, including kidney damage, impaired mental development and cancer.

How do these toxins and other dangerous contaminants get into the flesh of the fish on our plate at dinnertime? They get there through the dumping of chemical, industrial and toxic waste by factories and industries, pollution by ships and naval vessels, as well as simply through the sewage which pollutes our waterways – both human as well as animal feces. This sewage waste contains dangerous bacteria which may not affect the fish, but certainly affect us when we eat the fish. By eating fish, we expose ourselves to the unnecessary risk of contracting serious bacterial illnesses that can lead to organ failure, nervous system damage, and even death.

Perhaps we think though that we couldn't possibly ingest enough of these toxins to harm us. However, a study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that women who ate fish even just twice a week had blood mercury concentrations seven times higher than women who hadn't eaten fish in the previous month. Studies have also shown that a 140-pound woman will have 30% more mercury in her blood than the EPA deems safe, simply by eating one small can of white tuna fish every week.

Mercury poisoning leads to heart problems, including heart disease and heart attacks, as well as brain damage, memory loss,

personality change, tremors, spontaneous abortion, and damage to a developing fetus.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are synthetic chemicals that are used in hydraulic fluids and oils and electrical capacitors and transformers. PCBs are dangerous because they act like hormones, wreaking havoc on the nervous system and contributing to a variety of illnesses, including cancer, infertility, decreased mental function and other problems.

These chemicals are frequently found – in extraordinarily high amounts – in the flesh of sea life ranging from small fish to dolphins!

Salmon

Due to the overfishing of salmon in the wild, extensive fish farms have been established where salmon are raised like a commodity. However, lest we think that the farmed fish are safer, it is important to note that the diet of farmed salmon is the flesh of wild-caught fish! It takes five pounds of commercially, wild fish to create one pound of farmed fish, due to the fact that it has to be continually fed to the salmon in the farms in order for them to grow nice and fat.

All the commercially-netted fish come with heavy doses of toxins, which then concentrate in the flesh of farmed fish, making it potentially the most toxic thing humans put into their bodies. Farmed salmon also have twice the fat of wild salmon, and this fat collects and stores even more toxins.

The “pink” color that everyone loves about salmon comes from

“Scientists estimate that fish endure up to fifteen minutes of excruciating pain before they lose consciousness.”

– PETA

the wild plankton that wild salmon eat. Yet, there is no plankton in the farms, so in order to give the same pink color, artificial food dye is added into the farmed salmon's feed! This dye has been shown to cause retinal damage.

Do Fish Feel Pain?

While it may seem obvious that fish are able to feel pain, like every other animal, some people still think of fish as swimming vegetables. In fact, regarding the ability to feel pain, fish are equal to dogs, cats, and all other animals. Dr. Donald Broom, scientific advisor to the British government, explains, "The scientific literature is quite clear. Anatomically, physiologically and biologically, the pain system in fish is virtually the same as in birds and animals." (PETA)

Fish have nerves and connections to the brain that sense and process pain very similarly to the way all other animals – including humans – do. Their nervous systems resemble our own in many ways, leading neurologists to conclude that they absolutely have the capacity to feel pain and to suffer. "The pain a fish feels when she's hooked is like dentistry without Novocaine [anesthesia]," says Dr. Tom Hopkins, Professor of Marine Science, University of Alabama, USA.

Many times, amazingly, the fish are still alive when they reach the deck of the boat, after being trapped in nets, dragged for long distances with the strings of the net tearing at their gills or dragged, bloody, hooked onto metal hooks. The typical procedure, upon pulling the fish up into the boat, is to immediately slit their gills and disembowel them. Every fish that is still alive is

"The pain a fish feels when she's hooked is like dentistry without Novocaine [anesthesia]." – Dr. Tom Hopkins, Professor of Marine Science, University of Alabama, USA

therefore conscious and aware (and quite able to experience pain) while its gills are slit, thereby suffocating the fish, and its organs are removed. Smaller fish are typically just dumped – after being pulled up out of the ocean, onto sheets of ice where they slowly freeze to death or are crushed/suffocated to death as thousands of their schoolmates are dumped on top of them. “Scientists estimate that fish endure up to fifteen minutes of excruciating pain before they lose consciousness.” (PETA)

The Environmental Effect of Fishing on the Ocean

Eating fish is not simply violent to our own bodies and to the fish themselves. Rather, it is also violent to the entire marine ecosystem. Commercial fishers kill hundreds of billions of animals every year – far more than any other industry – and they’ve decimated our ocean ecosystems. The U.S. fishing industry kills more than six billion fish each year, while sport-fishing and angling kills another 245 million fish. More than 90% percent of large fish populations have been completely exterminated in the past fifty years. In fact, a report published by the academic journal *Science* estimates that by the year 2048, our oceans will be completely depleted (PETA). This is the fastest rate of extinction anywhere on the planet due to any cause.

It is not only the fish they are aiming to catch which are killed by fisherman. Rather, nearly 1,000 other marine mammals, such as dolphins, whales, and porpoises, die *every day* by being caught “accidentally” in fishing nets. Some scientists have estimated that the boats and fishermen who catch shrimp actually discard 85% of their catch, due to the fact that it is not shrimp. That means for every fifteen pieces of shrimp which make it on to our plate in the restaurant, a full eighty-five other types of fish were killed unnecessarily.

It is not only shrimp fishing that is to blame for decimating our

oceans. Every year, commercial fishers dump more than twenty million tons of non-targeted fish alone – most of them dead or dying – back into the oceans. That’s one-fourth of all the fish of all types caught worldwide. This figure doesn’t even take into account the other marine animals – turtles, sea birds, seals, etc. – who have been caught in the boats’ massive nets.

The following is a vivid description of the mass destruction caused by fishing:

“Long-lining is one of the most widespread methods of fishing. Ships unreel as much as seventy-five miles of line bristling with hundreds of thousands of baited hooks. The hooks are dragged behind the boat at varying depths or are kept afloat by buoys and left overnight, luring any animal in the area to grab a free meal. Once hooked, some animals drown or bleed to death in the water, and many others struggle for hours until the boat returns to reel them in. Large fish such as swordfish and yellowfin tuna, weighing hundreds of pounds each, are pulled toward the boat by the baited line. Fishermen sink pickaxes into the animals’ fins, sides, and even eyes – any part of the fish that will allow them to haul the animals aboard without ripping out the hook. Many of the fish are still alive, and they are clubbed to death or slowly bleed to death when their gills are sliced open.” (PETA)

Long lining is not only violent to the fish they are looking to catch. Billions of fish, sharks, sea turtles, dolphins, birds, and other marine animals are injured and killed by long-lines each year. For example, a study at Duke University found that more than 300,000 turtles are killed by fishermen’s nets every year.

Is Fish-Farming Better for the Ocean Environment?

According to the Norwegian government, the salmon and trout

farms in Norway alone produce roughly the same amount of sewage as New York City. In some cases, the massive amount of fish excrement settling below fish cages has actually caused the ocean floor to rot. Dead fish carcasses and uneaten antibiotic-laden fish feed also pollute the coastal areas that surround these farms. The sludge of fish feces and other debris can be toxic for already-strained ocean ecosystems.

In Canada, the sewage from the fish farms is equivalent to a city of 500,000 people. If you can imagine the effects on the ocean and marine life that the raw, untreated sewage of 500,000 people being dumped daily into the coastal waters would have, then you can imagine the effect of fish farms.

Further, just as cows and chickens who are raised in factories are significantly more susceptible to disease than their wild counterparts, so are farmed fish significantly more susceptible to illness than those in the open sea. For this reason, fish farmers dump massive amounts of antibiotics into the fish food. However, the problem for those who say, “Oh, I only eat wild fish” is that the fish farm cages are open. Therefore, the molecules of disease as well as the antibiotics float easily from within the farm to the “wild” ocean outside. Entire coastal areas where fish farming takes place are becoming veritable storehouses of illness, disease, parasites and antibiotic-laden feed.

Eggs

What about eggs? So many people say that they are vegetarian, but they eat eggs. An egg is a chicken about to be born. If left to Nature, and if given warmth, that egg will hatch into a hen or rooster. I often ask people: If we were to remove the baby chick from the egg a day before it hatched, would that be vegetarian? They all agree that it would not. “What about a week before it hatches?” I ask them. They agree that still it is not vegetarian. Whether that egg is cracked and eaten a day, a week or several weeks prior to hatching does not change the nature of the food. It is a chicken which is going to be born. Just because hens lay their eggs outside their bodies, rather than reproducing the way humans do with the baby growing inside the body, does not mean that we can take these about-to-become-chickens and eat them and consider ourselves vegetarians.

Egg-Laying Hens

280 million hens are used for their eggs each year. The life of an egg-laying hen is as bad as the chickens and cows, perhaps even worse. Up to 100,000 of them are frequently squeezed into one building, in crates of 18 inches by 20 inches with five to eleven hens per crate! These miserable conditions give each hen the amount of space it would have if you stuffed several of them into one small office filing drawer. They never have the space to even lift up a wing during the course of their lives. Naturally in situations like these the hens become frustrated, anxious, and panicked. So, they peck each other, causing death and injury to

other hens, leading to a loss of profits for the company. The solution? Their beaks are cut off to prevent injury to other hens. Rather than simply give them enough space in which to live, the egg producers mutilate the hens' beaks, frequently preventing the hens from being able to eat, often causing them to starve to death.

In addition to their beaks, hens frequently have their toes and claws cut off (without any anesthesia) so that these do not become stuck in the metal wires of their crates.

These crates are piled high on top of each other. In this way, not only are they denied space to move, let alone roam around, but when one chicken goes to the bathroom, it falls through the crates onto the chickens below. The crates are never cleaned and the chickens never see the sunlight; the light from the artificial bulbs is enough to keep them functioning.

Additionally, if egg production decreases, the hens are forced into a process called "forced molting." In forced molting, the hens are deprived of food and water in order to start a new cycle (for those who survive the starvation). The hens are given no food for approximately fourteen days and no water for three days. During this time they lose up to one-third of their body weight and their feathers fall off. After this period of starvation, their egg-laying capacity receives a temporary boost (unless of course they die in the process). Often, the eggs produced in these factories are called "concentration camp eggs."

Murder of the "Useless" Roosters

Naturally, in these hen farms, not all of the eggs can be sold off

Whether an egg is cracked open and eaten a day, a week or several weeks before its contents hatch does not change the fact that its contents are not vegetarian!

to supermarkets and other companies because the farm must ensure that the production rate continues. Therefore, depending on the size of the farm, a large number of these eggs are actually allowed to hatch so that new hens can be born to become egg-layers. However, at least 50% of the chicks will be male. There is little use for roosters in the egg business since they cannot grow up to lay eggs. These males cannot be sold to chicken farms to become broiler chickens (chickens raised for meat), as the breeds of chickens used on egg farms are distinctly different than those used on broiler chicken farms. Therefore, with no use for them, these egg farms systematically execute every one of the baby male chicks by suffocating them in garbage bags or throwing them alive into large meat grinders. Then, they become recycled feed for the hens and other livestock.

More chicks are killed this way every year in the USA than there are people in the entire country.

Seeing A Developing Chick Inside The Egg

There is an exhibit at the Los Angeles Museum of Science that I wish everyone could see. The exhibit includes a very large, high-powered microscope set up over a huge microscope slide which has six or seven specimens on it. With the naked eye, without the microscope, each of the specimens looks identical. They look like the tiny, slimy, white piece of mucus-like material that sticks out of every egg yolk. If you've ever cracked open a raw egg, you see there is a yellow yolk in the middle, white surrounding the yolk, and then this ever-so-tiny thing sticking out of the yolk. It is so small that most people don't pay any attention to it.

More than 300 million baby male chicks are systematically, senselessly and needlessly murdered every year by the egg industry, because – as males – they are “useless” at laying eggs.

However, when the microscope gets moved over the slides so that we can see, that tiny little white mucus-like thing is actually a chicken fetus! Even from day one of its gestation period, one can make out a skull and a backbone. As the days of gestation progress in the exhibit, arms, legs and a complex nervous system become visible. It is amazing to realize that this tiny sliver which we usually just ignore or scramble up into our eggs is actually a developing chicken fetus. In fact, the yolk and white of the egg are the food which the developing chick will eat prior to hatching. Unlike human babies, who are fed *in utero* through the placenta and umbilical cord, chicken fetuses must take their nourishment from within the egg itself.

I believe that if everyone could see the chicken fetus as it exists in the egg, we would never again be able to scramble this egg up into an omelet. Further, we would never be able to doubt that this egg is truly a living being and eating it is just as much murder as killing the hen who laid it.

Section III:

Vegetarianism and Ecology

As a vegetarian, you will help to solve problems of:

- World Hunger
- Deforestation & Environmental Destruction
- Global Warming
 - Poverty
- Water Wastage

“The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.”

– Buddhist Proverb

Aside from all the compelling moral and spiritual reasons, one can now say that vegetarianism is the only responsible choice in terms of waste and ecology. The natural resources of our planet are diminishing at terrifying rates. More than a third of the world goes to bed hungry each night. And we wonder what we can do. Being a vegetarian addresses almost each and every ecological issue.

Why does eating meat deprive starving children of food?

- It takes sixteen pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef. This grain is fed to the cows who are later killed to make beef. However, it takes only one pound of grain to produce one pound of bread. So, if we used our grain to produce bread rather than feed it to cows in order to make hamburgers, we could feed sixteen times as many people.
- Every day, 40,000 children starve to death. Every day we produce enough grain to provide *every* person on Earth with more than two loaves of bread. However, this grain is not being fed to people; rather, it is being fed to livestock.
- Across the world, an average of 40% of the grain produced is fed to livestock.
- 1,400,000,000 people (1.4 billion) could be fed by the grain which is given to U.S. livestock.
- One acre of fertile land can grow 40,000 pounds of potatoes.

*We could feed ten billion people a year if everyone were vegetarian.
Not one person on Earth would have to go to sleep hungry at night.*

That same acre can provide only 250 pounds of beef if it is used to grow grain for cattle-feed.

- If you take 2.5 acres of land and use it to grow potatoes, you can feed twenty-two people. If you use it to grow rice, you can feed nineteen people. But, if you use it to produce chicken (including the food for the chicken and raising the chickens), you can only feed two people. Even worse, if you use it to produce eggs or beef (including the food for the hens or cows and the factory itself), you can only feed one person. With so many people starving in the world, how can we take our land and use it so irresponsibly?
- If meat-eaters reduce their intake of meat by only 10% (it means they would still eat 90% as much meat as they do now), we could feed every one of the people who die of starvation and hunger-related diseases every day across the world.
- We could feed ten billion people a year if we were all vegetarian. This is more than human population. There is no need for *anyone* to go hungry in the world – the only reason is the selfishness of the choices we make.

Why is meat eating bad for our environment?

- The damage done to our rainforests due to the production of beef is enormous. It is estimated that for every hamburger made from rainforest beef, fifty-five square feet of rainforest land is destroyed. More than 2.9 million acres of the Brazilian rainforest (as well as all the animals that inhabit that rainforest) were destroyed in the 2004-2005 crop season alone.

Every day 40,000 children starve to death, while the US alone produces enough to give every person on Earth two loaves of bread a day. Instead, this grain is being fed to livestock, not people.

- More than 260 million acres of U.S. forest has been cleared to grow grain for farmed animals.
- According to the Smithsonian Institute, the equivalent of seven football fields of land is bulldozed worldwide every minute to create room for farmed animals.
- For one hamburger, seventy-five kilograms of carbon dioxide (one of the main gases leading to the global warming problem) are released into the air. If you drove your car all day long, it would only release three kilograms!
- 25% of the methane produced in the world, another leading gas causing global warming, is produced by livestock.
- The animal industry produces more than 65% of worldwide nitrous oxide emissions, yet another main gas leading to global warming.
- The leading cause of deforestation and species extinction across the world is livestock grazing.
- 50% of the planet's land is used for grazing! Imagine what good uses we could put that land to if we gave up our meat addictions.
- The world's petroleum resources would last only thirteen years if everyone ate a meat-based diet, but it would last 260 years if everyone ate a vegetarian diet.

Why is meat-eating hurting the poor?

- A pound of protein from meat costs \$15.40, but a pound of

For each hamburger made from rainforest beef, seventy-five kilograms of carbon dioxide are released into the air. This is the equivalent of driving your car all day long for twenty-five days!

protein from wheat costs \$1.50.

- So, meat costs ten times as much for the same nutritional value.
- Could we not use that money for such better causes? Is there no more important use for that money than to kill animals?

How does meat eating relate to water wastage?

- The production of one pound of beef takes 2,500 gallons of water. This water is used to grow the food for the livestock, to water them and then to wash their bloody bodies and turn them into beef. The production of one pound of wheat or potatoes takes twenty-five gallons of water.
 - So, we would waste one hundred times less water if we ate wheat instead of meat.
- The production of chicken takes 815 gallons of water. So, if you eat chicken, you are wasting thirty-three times as much water as if you ate a vegetarian diet!
- In an average shower of seven minutes, every day, you would use approximately 2,600 gallons of water in six months. That means that the same amount of water is used in the production of one pound of beef as in showering every day for six months!
- *Newsweek* magazine is quoted as saying, “The amount of water that goes into a 1,000 pound steer [male cow who will

The amount of water used in bathing daily for six months is the same amount of water that is needed to produce one pound of beef! Thus, in order to compensate for the wastage of water in a hamburger, we would have to refrain from bathing for many months.

become beef] could float a Naval destroyer ship.” Imagine how much water would be needed to keep a Naval destroyer ship afloat! That same amount of water is used to produce beef from just one cow!

Section IV:

Health Issues

- Cancer
 - Heart Disease
- Resistance to Antibiotics
 - The Hormone Effect
 - The Fecal Stew
- Bacteria and Pathogens
 - The Protein Myth

“In regions where...meat is scarce, heart disease is unknown.”

– Time Magazine

Cancer

Every medical text, every health book in every bookstore or library talks about the undeniable link between high-fat diets and heart disease or cancer. It is well known that people who eat meat-based diets have anywhere from two to twenty times higher rates of death from heart disease and cancer than vegetarians. According to a major 2006 Harvard study of 135,000 people, those who frequently ate grilled, skinless chicken had a 52% higher chance of developing bladder cancer than those who didn't (PETA). Additionally, it has been shown that 60-70% of cancer can be prevented by not smoking, staying physically fit, and eating a vegetarian diet rich in vegetables, fruits and legumes (like *dal*). A report by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research states, "Vegetarian diets decrease the risk of cancer." (Robbins 2001). One British study found that vegetarians had a 40% lower risk of cancer and a 20% lower risk of death from any cause than meat-eaters and that on average they outlive the rest of the human population by six to ten years.

Heart Disease

Heart disease is the disease most clearly linked to dietary intake. The relationship between saturated fat intake, cholesterol and heart disease is one of the strongest links in medical science. And what is the greatest contributor of saturated fat in our diet? Meat. The cholesterol levels of lacto-ovo-vegetarians (those who don't eat meat but do eat eggs and dairy) are on average 14% lower than non-vegetarians, while the cholesterol levels for vegans (those who also don't eat eggs or dairy) is 35% lower than non-vegetarians. In fact, vegetarians have the lowest rates

Vegetarians have the lowest rates of heart disease. In the UK, vegetarians outlive the rest of the population by an average of six to ten years.

of heart disease of any group.

Every hour hundreds of people die of heart disease. Dr. Dean Ornish, M.D. a cardiac specialist in California, USA is the first allopathic doctor ever to be able to “cure” heart disease. Others have slowed the process but never before has it been truly reversed. His “cure” consists of a pure vegetarian diet, yoga, meditation and walking. However, we might think that it was the meditation, yoga or walking which made people less “stressed” and therefore maybe reversed heart disease. But, the truth is that the truly significant factor is the low-fat, vegetarian diet. Other studies have been done since then which have shown similar results of reversal of heart disease by using *only* the strict vegetarian, low-fat diet, such as a twelve-year study conducted by Dr. Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr. “In this study, patients become virtually heart attack-proof,” Dr. Esselstyn showed.

Resistance to Antibiotics

A health issue less frequently discussed is the antibiotics factor. The animals are loaded up with antibiotics in order to prevent the diseases that their poor treatment causes. For example, more than 20% of the cows and pigs in these farms die prematurely due to disease and infection; 70% of pigs have pneumonia at the time they are slaughtered. The environments are so unsanitary that the animals have a very great risk of developing infections. So, antibiotics are fed to them in great quantity in their feed. When we eat the animals, we ingest the antibiotics as well.

However, bacteria are resilient. Bacteria develop resistance and immunity to antibiotics, whether we take the antibiotics themselves or simply eat the meat of an animal who has taken them.

“A vegetarian diet can prevent 97% of our coronary occlusions.”
– *Journal of the America Medical Association*

So then, when we are sick and actually need antibiotics, they do not work as the bacteria in our bodies have already developed resistances and mutations to the antibiotics through so many years of ingesting them in meat.

Each year more and more antibiotics become futile and powerless; each year there are more and more resistant strains of bacterial infections. When Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, not even one strain of *staphylococcus aureus* (one of the main and most virulent strains of bacteria which causes a wide range of serious infections) was immune to it, but he warned that overuse of the drug would lead to immunity. However, no one paid attention and large doses of penicillin have been fed to animals for decades in their feed. Each year, 24.6 million pounds of antibiotics are fed to animals purely as routine, not as a treatment for any illness. Today, 95% of *staphylococcus aureus* strains are immune to penicillin as well as other, newer antibiotics.

Hormones

Another issue has to do with hormones. The animals are fed large doses of hormones to make them fatter, bigger, and “juicier.” This is similar to body builders taking steroid hormones to become stronger, even though these hormones are dangerous to their health. We have seen many cases where athletes have suffered serious health consequences and even death from over ingestion of steroids.

Further, there is substantial evidence that over-secretion of hormones within our own bodies leads to disease. For example, over-secretion of adrenaline and stress hormones can lead to heart disease. Over-secretion of estrogen has been associated

Between 90-100% of US beef cows receive hormones.

with cancer in women. Yet, when we eat meat, we are ingesting the tissues of animals who have been frequently fed carcinogenic hormones. Between 90-100% of US beef cows receive hormones. The rates vary in different parts of the world. This means that we are not only eating meat, but we are also eating hormones that our bodies don't need and that may be putting our lives and health in jeopardy.

The Fecal Stew

When you imagine hundreds and hundreds of animals being slaughtered *per hour* in a slaughter house, you can imagine the conditions: blood, feces, mucus. In many factories, the workers kill up to 330 cows per hour. Then, the cows are slit up the center in order for their organs to be removed. However, when you are trying to do 330 of them in one hour, that leaves you only 10.9 seconds per cow. At rates such as these, mistakes happen frequently and the cows' intestines are frequently cut open during this "gutting." When that happens, their feces spill into the rest of their body cavity, contaminating the meat we will later eat for dinner. Additionally, once they have been "guttied," the cow carcasses are put all together into cold water. By doing this, the feces from one cow spill into the water and contaminate all of the other meat in the water. This water bath has been referred to as a "fecal stew".

For chickens it is similar: they are transported to the slaughterhouse crammed so tightly together in trucks that feces, blood and urine frequently are found crusted on their bodies. Then, at the time of their death, the public conscience organization Public Citizen explains, "Individual chickens are gutted [have their internal organs removed] by a machine with a metal hook, which often breaks the intestine and contaminates the cavity of the bird. The chicken carcass is then left in a bath of cold water for one hour so it will become heavier [like a sponge]. This bath is one

of the leading causes of fecal contamination and the spread of pathogens.” However, the industries refuse to stop this “fecal stew” bath, because that extra water weight earns them millions of dollars each year.

The researchers and scientists who work with these animals and factory farms have no excuse for the deplorable conditions. In fact, a former Dietary Association microbiologist said of chicken today, “The final product is no different than if you stuck the chicken in the toilet and then ate it.”

A Full Buffet of Bacteria and Pathogens

It is not only the issue of meat becoming “contaminated” by feces, urine and blood that should worry us. Inherent in the very nature of meat-eating is the risk of bacterial infections. Food-borne bacteria is something that can cause everything ranging from mild stomach cramps and diarrhea to hallucinations and death. The most commonly found food-borne bacteria are those in meat and egg products, including *E. coli*, *listeria*, *salmonella*, and *campylobacter*.

E.coli bacteria can cause gastrointestinal ailments, internal hemorrhaging, respiratory failure, inflammation of the heart, and death. It has been found in 50% of US cattle carcasses and in 89% of packaged ground beef in restaurants and supermarkets! *Campylobacter* is found in approximately 70% of chickens and 90% of turkeys in the USA and can cause bloody diarrhea and fever as well as lead to a life-threatening paralysis disorder. Chickens are not only infected with *campylobacter*, but also frequently with *salmonella*, a pathogen that can cause abdominal cramps, fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. In fact, a 2006 study by *Consumer Reports* found that 83% of chicken in grocery stores was infected with either *campylobacter*, *salmonella*, or both (PETA). *Salmonella* is a major problem in eggs, and more than 650,000

people in the USA alone are sickened from eating *salmonella*-infected eggs each year!

Another major pathogen found in meat, chicken, eggs and dairy products is *listeria*, a bacteria that causes hospitalization in 92% of those infected and death in 20%.

With such high rates of disease, bacteria and pathogen infection, the meat industry does not take any steps to reduce the actual cause of the problem (the despicably unhygienic conditions of the factory farms and slaughterhouses). Rather, their solution is to “irradiate” the meat before it is sold. This does not remove the blood, feces, urine and mucus from the meat, but rather it exposes the meat to such high levels of radiation that theoretically it kills the bacteria. However, as the Center for Science in the Public Interest said, “Consumers want safe food, not irradiated filth.” Additionally, food irradiation exposes the food to the radioactive equivalent of 2.5 million chest x-rays! And then we eat it for dinner!

The Protein Myth

“But what about protein?” So many people ask this of vegetarians. “How can you get enough protein? Don’t you have to eat a lot of beans?” The answer is several-fold: first of all, we don’t need nearly as much protein as the meat and dairy industries would like us to believe. Protein is used to build muscle and bone. Our building and growing needs are naturally greatest when we are very young. New babies are at their greatest need of protein. Yet, what is the perfect food for newborn babies? Mother’s milk. Mother’s milk is only 5% protein! Yet, the meat and dairy council would like us to believe that as fully grown

If we eat a varied, balanced vegetarian diet, we are sure to get enough protein.

adults we need between 30-40% of our daily intake from protein. This is absurd. It is nothing less than a marketing strategy.

In fact, if you look at the advice given by unbiased, scientific organizations, you will see that their recommended percentage of protein is significantly less than that suggested by the meat and dairy industry-sponsored “research.” For example, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* recommends 2.5% daily intake of protein, the World Health Organization recommends 4.5%, and the Food and Nutrition Board (after factoring in safety margins) recommends 6%.

Second, plant food – vegetables, grains and legumes – all have sufficient protein for our daily requirements. If we eat a balanced diet, we are sure to get enough protein. Good sources of protein are lentils, tofu, low-fat dairy products, nuts, seeds, tempeh, and peas. Many grains such as whole grain bread, pasta, and corn also add protein to our diet. For example, lentils are 29% protein, split peas are 28%, spinach is 49%, cauliflower is 40%, lettuce is 34%, and even tomatoes are 18%. Nuts range from around 12-18%.

It is only if you are malnourished (either due to starvation or due to very poor dietary habits such as eating only candy) that you would not get enough protein. As long as we are eating enough calories to maintain our weight, and not merely eating candy and soda pop, we will get enough protein.

But what about food combining? Don't we need to carefully combine our food to get enough protein?

The myth about food combining was very popular a few de-

* Note - For more information on this topic, see “Position of the American Dietetic Association: Vegetarianian Diets,” *JADA*, November 1997 and *A Vegetarian Sourcebook* by Keith Akers, Vegetarian Press, 1993.

ades ago, but has since been both scientifically refuted as well as publicly rescinded by the very authors who popularized it. If, throughout the course of our day we eat enough variety of vegetables, legumes, and grains, we will easily get enough protein. These items do not have to be eaten always at the same meal.*

But what about iron? Won't we become anemic if we are vegetarian?

There are many good iron sources in vegetarian foods including dried beans, spinach, chard, beet greens, blackstrap molasses, bulgur, prune juice, and dried fruit. To increase the amount of iron absorbed at a meal, eat foods containing vitamin C, such as citrus fruit or juices, tomatoes, or broccoli. Cooking food in iron cookware also adds to iron intake.

What about calcium?

In addition to milk, good calcium sources are: collard greens, broccoli, kale, turnip greens, tofu prepared with calcium, and fortified soy milk.

What about Vitamin B12?

Vitamin B12 is the only nutrient which comes only from animal sources. The adult recommended intake for vitamin B12 is very low. A diet containing dairy products provides adequate vitamin B12. Fortified foods, such as some brands of cereal, nutritional yeast, soy milk, or soy analogs are good non-animal sources. Check labels to discover other products that are fortified with vitamin B12. Tempeh and sea vegetables may contain vitamin B12, but their content varies and may be unreliable. To be on the safe side, if you are one of the few people who do not consume dairy products, or fortified foods regularly, you can take a non-animal derived supplement. Much research still needs to

be done on vitamin B12 needs and sources.

Children and Vegetarianism

According to The American Dietetic Association, vegetarian diets can meet all nitrogen needs and amino acid requirements for growth. A vegan diet should be well planned, balanced and perhaps include fortified soy milk. All over the world there are populations of children raised in vegetarian cultures who are just as strong and healthy (if not perhaps stronger and healthier) as their non-vegetarian counterparts.

Section V:

Leather & Fur

Every day, millions of animals are killed in the name of fashion. Wherever the animals come from – whether it be Indian leather slaughterhouses, Chinese fur factory farms, European mink farms, or the wilds of the USA – the violence is horrendous. Every piece of leather, every piece of fur is the result of an incredible amount of suffering and loss of life.

What about leather? Isn't it just an unintentional by-product?

Every year, more than a billion animals are slaughtered for the skins.* Leather is made from the skins of cows, pigs, and goats, as well as exotic animals like sheep, alligators, ostriches, and kangaroos. In China, even the skins of dogs and cats are used to make leather. Many people tragically use and wear leather thoughtlessly as they assume that it is just a natural by-product when the animal is killed for other reasons or dies a natural death. Unfortunately, this is far from true. The leather industry is one of the most insidious industries – both for the incredible violence it inflicts upon the animals themselves as well as for the enormous contribution it makes to the pollution of our earth.

Leather from the US

Each year, millions of cows and other creatures are killed in the US for their skins. Most leather comes from cows raised for both beef and milk. In fact, it is the most economically important by-product of the meat industry. Before they are slaughtered, these animals are raised in cruel factory farms, enduring extreme deprivation, extreme overcrowding--often only twenty square feet being allotted per steer--and neglect, as well as bodily mutilations such as castration, branding, tail-docking, and dehorning, all without painkillers.

* Note - All facts and figures in this section on leather and fur are graciously taken from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Log-in to www.peta.org for more information.

When their time comes for slaughter, cows are shipped long distances from the factory farms to the slaughterhouses, having to endure extreme weather conditions and overcrowding which leads to injury, hunger, and thirst. In winter time, cows are often found arriving at slaughterhouses frozen by their own feces and urine to the walls of the trucks they are shipped in. Many arrive already dead.

Once reaching the slaughterhouses, cows are dragged off of the trucks--often breaking their bones--and then are stunned, hung, bled to death, and skinned. Each year, millions of cows in the US being killed for their meat and skin are skinned and cut apart while still alive, crying out in pain and sheer terror.

It is important to note here that many animals in addition to cows are killed for leather. Goats, lamb, and even dogs and cats, as well as reptiles like snakes and lizards, are killed in hideous conditions around the world for their skin.

“Snakes and lizards are skinned alive because of the belief that live flaying makes leather more supple. Kid goats are boiled alive in order to make gloves, and the skins of unborn calves and lambs – sometimes purposely aborted, others taken from slaughtered pregnant cows or ewes – are considered especially “luxurious.” (PETA)

There is no law that states the source of the leather must be mentioned on a product. Hence the term “leather” could mean anything ranging from the skin of a baby calf to the skin of a dog.

Leather from India

In a country where the cow is considered holy, it is disheartening to know that India’s leather exports are one of the largest in the world and are ten times as much as its beef exports. Despite the push by animal rights groups for the Indian government to

improve the conditions in which cows and other animals are transported and are slaughtered, virtually no improvements have occurred. Although laws now exist to protect these animals in India, the laws are blatantly ignored. Unlicensed, illegal slaughterhouses continue to operate and animals continue to be abused in horrific ways.

Tragically, Constitutional laws that have been put in place to protect cows seem to be having the opposite effect. It is against the law in India to kill healthy cows. Therefore, they are deliberately injured or poisoned prior to being killed so that – should anyone check – it is clear that they were not “healthy”.

As there is not too much extra land in India for raising and grazing these cows, cows are collected from various places to be transported for slaughter. Their journey from place of residence to place of slaughter bears a chilling resemblance to that of the Jews to concentration camps during the Holocaust. These cows are forced on “death marches” for sometimes hundreds of kilometers, tied together with ropes through their noses. When they are fortunate enough to be transported by train, they are piled on top of one another, causing suffocation and sometimes fatal wounds, not to mention searing thirst in the Indian heat.

“During the marches, cattle collapse from hunger, exhaustion, injury and despair. Handlers force them along by snapping their tails at each joint and rubbing tobacco, chilies and salt into their eyes. Each snap brings pain analogous to that of breaking a finger. They are never offered food or even as much as a drop of water.” (PETA India)

India law states that not more than six cattle can be transported within one truck at a time, yet this is often blatantly ignored.

Cows are routinely trampled and gored in these overcrowded trucks. By the time they reach the slaughterhouses, many are so sick and injured that they must be dragged inside. Those who make it to the filthy slaughterhouses still living are likely to have their legs snapped off, their skin removed and their throats slit while they are still fully conscious and in full view of one another--a horrifying sight for these loving, motherly creatures. No anesthesia is used.

Leather from China

China is world's largest exporter of leather. Even "nice" leather products such as Italian shoes or hands bags have their raw materials sent from China. Cattle, sheep and other animals, as well as approximately two millions cats and dogs are killed each year in China for their skin. Leather is usually not labeled as to which animals the skin comes from, so when you wear leather, there is no way of telling whose skin you are wearing.

In China, there are no laws guaranteeing the humane treatment of these animals. Thus, these animals endure harsh lives and are then routinely cut apart and skinned alive.

The Effect of Leather on the Environment

First, raising animals for leather takes a lot of the earth's natural resources: pastureland for grazing, land to grow the food, water, and fossil fuels. Then, the amount of excrement from the animals is so much that the EPA has deemed livestock pollution to be the greatest threat to our waterways. The methane produced from livestock waste is now even said to be one of the greatest contributors to global warming.

Aside from the violence to the animals themselves, tanneries (factories which produce the final "product" of leather) are one of the greatest environmental polluters. To turn skin into leather, tanneries have to dump large amounts of dangerous

chemicals such as mineral salts, formaldehyde, arsenic, coal-tar derivatives, and various oils, dyes, and finishes--some of which are cyanide-based--into the skins. In the U.S., leather is chrome-tanned; all wastes containing chromium are deemed hazardous by the EPA.

The production of leather is affecting people too. Rates of cancer, such as lung cancer and leukemia, and other diseases are much higher in those who work in or live by tanneries, as they are constantly exposed to the toxic chemicals used to make leather.

The tanneries on the banks of the holy Ganges river continue to dump literally tons of toxic waste into Her waters daily. The water of the Ganges downstream from the tanneries has been shown to have extraordinarily high levels of lead, cyanide and formaldehyde. Each of these is a poison in its own right. Taken together they are a veritable cocktail of death for the fish in the rivers as well as the animals living along the banks who drink the water. Further, as tens of thousands of acres of farmland are irrigated by untreated water from the Ganges, untold millions of people are being exposed to vegetables and grains grown in a toxic soup. Rates of myriad diseases including cancer, asthma, birth defects, skin diseases and gastro-intestinal diseases are found at significantly higher rates among the people who drink the water and eat the food grown in these fields.

What About Fur?

Fur is perhaps one of the cruelest practices inflicted on animals in the world today. Whether it came from an animal trapped in the wild or from an animal raised on a fur farm, the animal who wanted to live was subjected to incredible pain before its death.

Fur Farms

85% of fur used for clothing comes from fur factory farms. Animals on fur farms are forced to live their entire lives in cramped, filthy wire cages which are never cleaned. In order to maximize profits, thousands are housed together in dark, filthy sheds, where they are infected with the same diseases that factory-farm animals face. Alternatively, they are lined up in cages outdoors with hardly any room to move about, forced to endure freezing cold, pelting rain, and scorching heat. Disease and parasites run rampant on fur farms, and most of the animals are never treated.

On fur farms, animals are often driven crazy, both from the rough handling they endure and their inability to do anything natural – walk, run, build homes, hunt, meet mates – because of their confinement. Often, mother animals, who have nowhere to hide while giving birth, kill their babies as soon as they deliver. Animals chew on their own limbs and skin, throw their bodies against the bars, frantically pace and circle their cages, and even attack and eat their own cagemates.

There are no federal humane slaughter laws for animals being raised on fur farms, and fur farms continually refuse to stop practicing even the most horrendous, cruel killing methods. In order to keep the pelts of the animals intact, these animals are killed in incredibly violent ways, such as suffocation, neck-breaking, bludgeoning, hanging, electrocution, gas, and poison. Before they are skinned, animals are thrown to the ground and beaten. Many animals are skinned alive, kicking and fighting for life. One PETA investigation describes:

“When they begin to cut the skin and fur from an animal’s leg, the free limbs kick and writhe. Workers stomp on the necks and heads of animals who struggle too hard to allow a clean cut...When the fur is finally peeled off over the animals’ heads, their hairless, bloody bodies are thrown onto a pile of those who have gone before them. Some are still alive,

breathing in ragged gasps and blinking slowly. Some on the animals' hearts are still beating five to ten minutes after they are skinned. One investigator recorded a skinned raccoon dog on the heap of carcasses who had enough strength to lift his bloodied head and stare into the camera."

Other methods of executing animals on fur farms are "genital electrocution," a process in which animals either have clamps put on them or rods forced into their mouths and anuses and are then electrocuted, causing them to go into cardiac arrest while fully conscious, and poisoning with a chemical called strychnine, a poison that paralyzes the animals' muscles with painful cramps, causing them to suffocate.

China is one of the world's largest fur exporters, and more than half the fur in the USA comes from China. In China, there are no penalties for the abuse of animals. Thus, the animals on fur farms have absolutely no protection. Fur produced in Chinese fur farms is often deliberately mislabeled, thus when you wear fur, you may actually be wearing the skin of a dog, a cat, or some other beloved creature. In fact, PETA found, "Many of the animals [being sent to fur farms or slaughterhouses] still [have] collars on, a sign that they were once someone's beloved companion, stolen to be made into a fur coat." These animals are transported long distances in deplorable conditions from fur farms to their place of slaughter. Up to 8,000 animals are loaded into each truck, sometimes with up to twenty animals inside one cage alone. Cats and dogs have to endure harsh weather conditions, lack of food or water, open wounds, disease, all the problems that come from confinement such as insanity, and of course death. Every year millions of dogs and cats in China are bludgeoned, hung, bled to death, and sometimes skinned alive for their fur.

Animals Caught in the Wild

Animals caught in the wild are often caught in torturous traps, dying slowly over a period of many days from loss of blood,

shock, dehydration, frostbite, infection, and extreme weather conditions, as well as attacks from other predators whom they are not able to fight. Each year, millions of raccoons, coyotes, wolves, bobcats, opossums, nutria, beavers, otters, and other fur-bearing animals are killed by trappers.

To catch these animals, steel-jaw traps are used, slamming down on the animal's leg, cutting down to the bone. Animals, especially mother animals with babies, often panic from the incredible pain and attempt to chew off their own limbs to be free, eventually becoming exhausted and succumbing to exposure, frostbite, shock, and death. This trap, although deemed "inhumane" by the American Veterinary Medical Association and slowly being banned in many states in the USA as well as the entire European Union, is still the most widely-used in trapping.

Other forms of traps used are pole traps, underwater traps, and Conibear traps. Pole traps are a form of the steel-jaw trap, but are placed in a tree on a pole. Thus, when animals are caught, they are hoisted into the air, left to hang from their caught limb for hours or even days until the trapper comes back to kill them using incredibly methods such as strangling, beating, and stomping (in order to keep their pelt intact). Underwater traps are used to catch creatures like beavers, otters, muskrats, and nutria. These traps catch the animals underwater and force them to drown, a torturous process that can take more than nine minutes. Conibear traps catch animals by crushing their necks, applying ninety pounds of pressure per square inch, forcing the animals caught to suffocate. This can take anywhere from three to eight agonizing minutes to happen.

Besides the animals being killed for their fur, many other animals – both wild animals like deer, birds, and even endangered species to domestic animals like dogs and cats – are killed each year by these traps. Trappers actually refer to these animals as "trash kills," as they have no economic value and are thus use-

less to the trappers. Some states in the USA are beginning to have regulations on how these traps are used and how often they are checked, but these regulations range anywhere from every twenty-four hours to one week. Other states have absolutely no regulations at all.

In addition to these traps, the wild fur industry uses many other cruel methods to kill animals. Seals are bludgeoned repeatedly with clubs tipped with metal hooks, and bears are shot at point-blank range or caught in traps to die slowly, all because someone wants to wear their fur.

The Environmental Effect of Fur

Today, many in the fur industry are claiming that fur is “eco-friendly” and “natural.” However, when one looks at the effect the industry is having on the planet’s animals and environment, one can see that the fur industry is anything but “eco-friendly.” Thousands of animals are housed together in factory farms in order to maximize profits, and environmental regulations, especially on the farms in China, are often ignored.

First, there is the waste produced from the animals themselves. The amount of feces that comes out of fur factory farms is incredible. For example, one mink alone produces forty-four pounds of feces in its lifetime, adding up to over one million pounds of feces produced annually by mink farms in the US alone. In Denmark, more than two million minks are killed each year, releasing more than 8,000 pounds of ammonia from their feces into the atmosphere.

After the animals are slaughtered, the process their fur undergoes to become a fur coat is extremely damaging to the environment. A dangerous combination of chemicals such as ammonia, formaldehyde, hydrogen peroxide, chromates, bleaching agents, and various salts are loaded into the furs in order to dye and preserve them, to keep them from rotting in the buyers’ closets.

Then, the waste from these chemicals are often dumped into our waterways.

Further polluting the earth, the left-over skinned carcasses of the animals are dumped into landfills, their bodies often full the poisons used to kill them.

In addition to polluting our planet, fur industries are also using much of the world's precious resources. For example, producing a fur coat from factory-farmed animals takes more than fifteen times as much energy as producing a faux-fur coat.

Let Us Stop the Cruelty

With innumerable synthetic alternatives to leather and fur for our clothes, shoes and bags, to continue to purchase leather or fur for our personal use is a clear act of violence. An on-line search for “vegan,” “non-leather,” or “faux fur” footwear, purses, belts, clothing, and other items turns up tens of thousands of options around the world. There is no product for which an equally suitable, non-leather, non-fur alternative is not available. It just requires an effort, a focus and a commitment to make the choice for non-violence and sustainability.

Section VI:

A Vegetarian of All the Senses

We tend to think of food as just that which enters our mouth. However, we also “eat” through our eyes, we “eat” through our ears, and we “eat” through our senses.

I frequently hear people tell me that they are vegetarian, that they don’t eat anything which is a product of violence. Then, they go out and they watch horror movies, or look at pornography, or sit and engage in idle, derogatory gossip about others. These actions and “food” enter us and affect us just as what we eat.

Close your eyes for a moment and just let the thoughts flow. You will notice that the thoughts which come are those related to our daily lives, the people we associate with, the things we’ve seen or heard, and the places we’ve been. Sometimes we think we can move about unaffected by what we see and hear. We say, “But it’s only a movie,” or, “It’s just harmless gossip.” Yet, these are the things which actually determine our entire mental state.

How often do we hear children repeating words, phrases, or songs that they hear on TV or in the movies? How can we possibly expect that they will memorize all the words and yet be unaffected by the violence?

Everything we experience, whether directly or vicariously (as in a movie or television), leaves a distinct impression upon our being. These impressions, or *sanskaras*, later dictate the way we feel, the choices we make, and the lives we live.

We would never dump mud – or even cheap-quality gasoline – in our brand new car. We would not feed heavy, greasy,

poorly-cooked food to an athlete who was just about to run in the Olympics. So how can we so non-chalantly dump poison – through every organ – into our bodies?

There is a famous picture of Mahatma Gandhiji which used to be hung up all over India. It was Gandhiji sitting with three monkeys. One had its hands over its eyes; another had its hands over its mouth; and the third had its hands over its ears. The caption was, “See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil.” I would add even a fourth monkey with its hands on its head: “Think no evil.” Then, we will really be living a pure, divine life.

SECTION VII:

Conclusion

Across the industrialized world, everyone is talking about what we can do to save the planet. Ecological conservation has become a household word. There are thousands of programs dedicated to feeding the millions of starving children. Yet, while we may talk about wanting to save the planet or feed the hungry, these words are empty if our actions are in stark contrast. We may not be able to carry crates of food to the deserts of Africa. We may not be able to re-plant every tree that has been cut down in the forest. But, we can refuse to allow it to continue. We can refuse to partake of the cruelty. We can strive to make, at least our lives and our actions pure and divine.

Instead of a token donation to a hunger campaign or to an environmental organization, let us make our every day, every meal, one that protects not only our own health, but the health of our planet and the health of every person on it.

Famous Vegetarians

ACTORS/ACTRESSES

Pamela Anderson
Debbie Arnold
Rosanna Arquette
Amitabh Bachchan
Alec Baldwin
Brigitte Bardot
Drew Barrymore
Kim Basinger
Angela Bassett
Orlando Bloom
Kirk Cameron
Rachel Leigh Cook
James Cromwell
Ellen DeGeneres
Madhuri Dixit
David Duchovny
Michael J. Fox
Richard Gere
Woody Harrelson
Anne Hathaway
Dustin Hoffman
Shahid Kapoor
Tobey Maguire
Alyssa Milano
Kevin Nealon
Gwyneth Paltrow
Joaquin Phoenix
Natalie Portman
Amrita Rao
Jerry Seinfeld
Brooke Shields
Alicia Silverstone
Liv Tyler
Forest Whitaker

MUSICIANS

India.Arie
Joan Baez
Elvis Costello
Bob Dylan
Melissa Etheridge
George Harrison
Joan Jett
Anthony Kiedis
B.B. King
Gladys Knight
Lenny Kravitz
John and Yoko Lennon
Bob Marley
Chris Martin
Paul McCartney
Don McLean
Alanis Morissette
Sinead O'Connor
Ozzy Osborne
Prince
Shakira
Grace Slick
Ringo Starr
Shania Twain
Carrie Underwood
Barry White
Dweezil, Moon, Ahmet, Diva Zappa

OTHER FAMOUS VEGETARIANS

Albert Einstein
Michael Eisner (CEO of Disney)
Bill Ford (CEO of Ford Motor)
Steve Jobs (CEO of Apple Computers)
Leonardo da Vinci

Reasons to Be a Vegetarian

- If you have ever loved an animal
- If you believe in non-violence
- If you cannot give life, for then you have no right to
take life away
- If you want to prevent heart disease
- If you want to prevent cancer
- If you want to avoid bacterial contamination
- If you have compassion for living beings
- If you don't want your pet to end up as cow food when
he or she dies
- If you want to have inner peace and calm
- If you want to save water
- If you want to protect the rainforests
- If you care about the atmosphere
- If you want to conserve energy
- If you want to help the hungry
- If you want to help poverty
- If you want to eat *sattvic* food (meat is not *sattvic*)
- If you want to prevent diabetes
- If you want to prevent strokes
- If you want to prevent constipation and bowel diseases
- If you want to live a pure and clean life, both outside
and inside
- If you want to live longer
- If you want to live an honest life
- If you want to have a clean ecological footprint
- If you respect sentient life

If you want to feel less aggression, anger or restlessness in
your life

If you want to help feed starving children

If you want to have a healthy digestive tract

If you don't want to eat hormones and antibiotics

If you want to live a spiritual life

If you want to be a Yogi

If you want to lower your cholesterol

If you want to lower your blood pressure

If you want to lose weight

If you want future generations to have trees to climb in

If you want to live in accordance with

human's natural systems

If you want to make fullest use of our human birth

If you have compassion

If you care about the future

If you want to help end world hunger

If you don't want to contribute to global warming

If you think it is wrong to cause pain to conscious, feeling
creatures

If you have mercy

If you want to take a stand for the environment

If you don't want to financially support the factory farmers
who torture animals

If you want your body to be a true, pure temple for God

If you want to love and respect all of God's creatures

If you do not want to make your body a graveyard.

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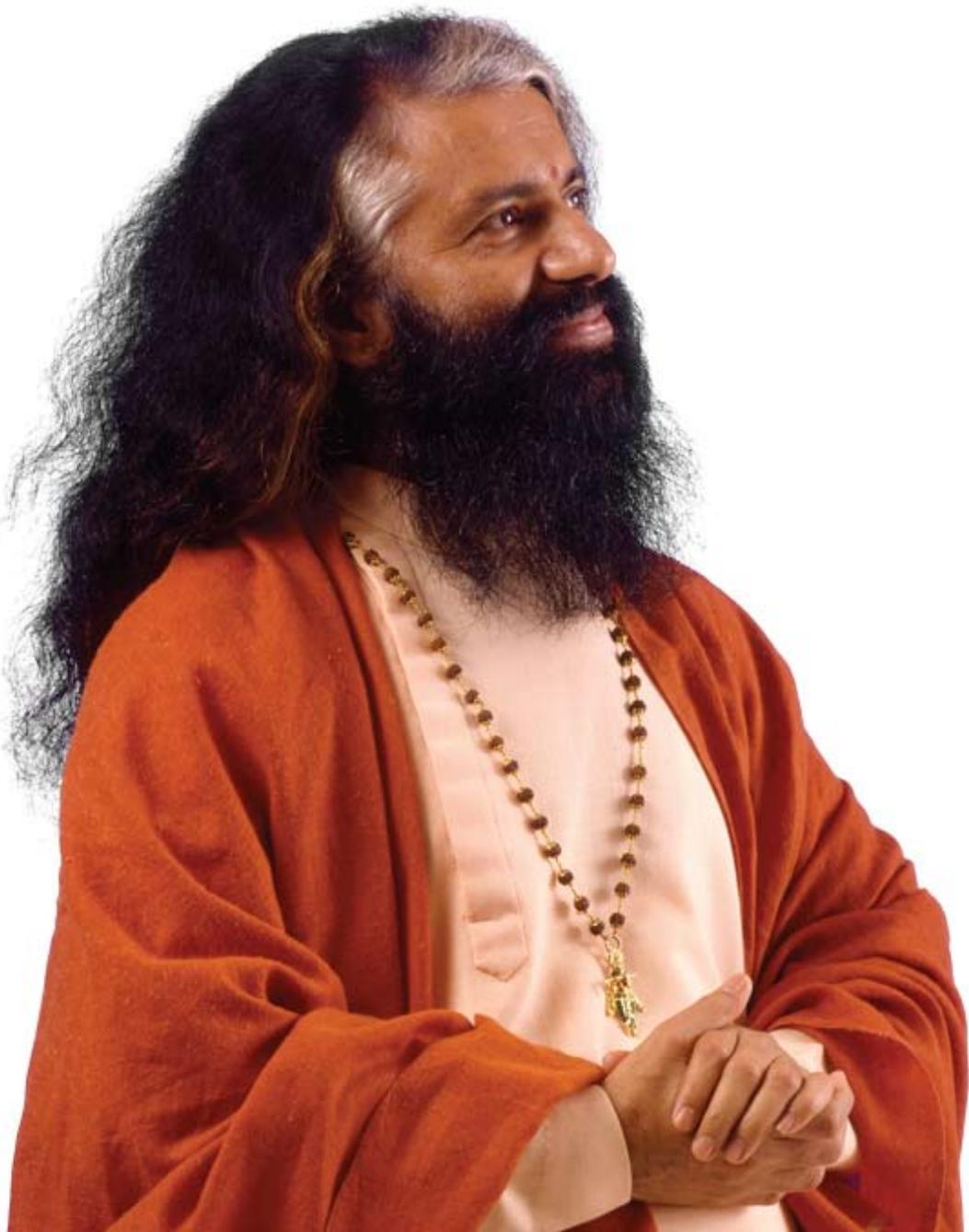
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Chidanand Saraswatiji*

Spiritual and Academic Education: H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji's motto in life is, "In the Service of God and humanity." Touched by the hand of God at the tender age of eight, Pujya Swamiji left His home to live a life devoted to God and humanity, spending His youth in silence, meditation and austerities high in the Himalayas. At the age of seventeen, after nine years of unbroken, intense *sadhana*, He returned from the forest—under the orders of His guru—and obtained an academic education to parallel His spiritual one. Pujya Swamiji has master's degrees in Sanskrit and Philosophy as well as fluency in many languages.

The Teaching of Unity: Unity, harmony, and the belief in infinite paths to God are the foundation of Pujya Swamiji's "religion." His goal is to bring everyone closer to God, regardless of what name one uses. "If you are a Hindu, be a better Hindu. If you are a Christian, be a better Christian. If you are a Muslim, be a better Muslim. If you are a Jew, be a better Jew," He says.

In this line, He has been a leader in numerous international, inter-faith conferences and parliaments, including the **Parliament of World Religions**; the **Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations**; the **World Economic Forum**; the **World Council of Religious Leaders at the United Nations**; the **World Conference of Religions for Peace**; the **Global Youth Peace Summit at the United Nations**; the **Hindu-Jewish Summit**; and the **Hindu-Christian Dialogue initiated by the Vatican**. He is also

a leader of frequent pilgrimages for peace across the world.

Spiritual Leader and Inspiration: Pujya Swamiji is the President and Spiritual Head of Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, one of India's largest and most renowned spiritual institutions. Under His divine inspiration and leadership, Parmarth Niketan has become a sanctuary known across the globe as one filled with grace, beauty, serenity and true divine bliss. Pujya Swamiji has also increased several-fold the humanitarian activities undertaken by Parmarth Niketan. Now, the ashram is not only a spiritual haven for those who visit, but it also provides education, training, and health care to those in need.

He is also the founder and the spiritual head of the first Hindu-Jain Temple in America. This beautiful, three-domed masterpiece is located on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has paved the way for unity between Hindus and Jains across America. Pujya Swamiji is also the founder and inspiration behind many other temples in the USA, Canada, Europe and Australia.

Guide to Youth: Pujya Swamiji knows that the youth are our future, and He is forever changing the course of that future through His profound effect on every youngster with whom He comes in contact. Children and adolescents seem to bloom like flowers under the rays of His light. Additionally, He gives pragmatic tools to help them unite in the spirit of peace, harmony and global change. Pujya Swamiji runs youth sessions and camps in the USA, Europe and throughout Asia.

Ceaseless Service: "Giving is Living" is Pujya Swamiji's motto; He is always in the midst of dozens of projects, each one a noble and tenaciously dedicated effort to make the world a better place for all of humanity. He is the Founder/Chairman of the India Heritage Research Foundation (IHRF), an international, non-profit, humanitarian organization dedicated to providing education, health care, youth welfare, and vocational training to the needy population. IHRF also, under the guidance and inspiration of Pujya Swamiji, is compiling the first *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* in history. Pujya Swamiji is also the Founder/

Chairman of the Divine Shakti Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to using the energy, strength and capability of women to help bring the light of life, hope, education and assistance to the abandoned, orphaned babies and young girls, as well as widowed and impoverished women.

Ganga Action Parivar: Pujya Swamiji is also the Founder of Ganga Action Parivar (GAP), a worldwide family of scientists, engineers, specialists, volunteers and devotees who are dedicated to working to make Mother Ganga's waters not only *nirmal* (clean) but also *aviral* (free-flowing). The work being undertaken by GAP is multi-faceted and extensive. See the separate Ganga Action Parivar section and also www.gangaaction.org for more details.

Awards and Recognitions: Pujya Swamiji is the recipient of innumerable awards for both His role as spiritual leader as well as for His unparalleled humanitarian work. Some of the more noteworthy are as follows:

1. Mahatma Gandhi Humanitarian Award, given by the Mayor of New Jersey, USA for outstanding charitable and interfaith work
2. Hindu of the Year, 1991, by the international magazine *Hinduism Today*, for masterminding the project of the next millennium, the *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*
3. Uttaranchal Ratan ("Jewel of the State of Uttaranchal") Award
4. Bharat Vikas Parishad 1st Utkrishtta Samman Award
5. Devarishi Award, by Sandipani Vidya Niketan, under the guidance of Pujya Sant Rameshbhai Oza, for promoting Indian culture and heritage across the world
6. Bhaskar Award, 1998, by Mystic India and Bharat Nirman,

for Outstanding Humanitarian Service

7. Prominent Personality Award, by Lions' Club
8. Diwaliben Mohanlal Mehta Charitable Trust Award for Progress in Religion
9. Best Citizens of India Award

Further, He has been given the title of Patron of the Russian Indian Heritage Research Foundation, Moscow, and is also a Patron of the Centre for Religious Experience in Oxford, UK.

The True *Sanyasi*: Pujya Swamiji seems unaffected by this incredible list of accomplishments and remains a pious child of God, owning nothing, draped in saffron robes, living a life of true renunciation. His days in Rishikesh are spent offering service to those around Him. Thousands travel from America, Europe and Australia as well as from all over India, simply to sit in His presence and receive His *darshan*. To them, the journey is an inconsequential price to pay for the priceless gift of His *satsang*. He travels the world, bringing the light of wisdom, inspiration, upliftment and the divine touch to thousands across the world.



INDIA HERITAGE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji is the founder and chairman of the India Heritage Research Foundation, a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to humanitarian and cultural projects. Founded in 1987, IHRF is committed to preserving the timeless wisdom and ageless grandeur of Indian culture. By weaving together ancient tradition, cultural history, a wide range of non-discriminatory charitable services, and inspiring youth programs, IHRF has created a tapestry of true, universal beauty.

The Encyclopedia of Hinduism

IHRF has completed the revolutionary project of compiling the first *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* in history. The *Encyclopedia* will mark the first time that the urgent need is met for an authentic, objective and insightful well of information, capturing both the staples and the spices of Indian tradition and culture. This eleven-volume work was previewed and blessed by the hands of the Dalai Lama and many other revered saints at a large function during the Maha Kumbha Mela in Haridwar in 2010, and will be available internationally by the end of 2011.

The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* will be a significant landmark, encompassing the entire spectrum of the land called Bharat.

IHRF is dedicated to youth, education, spirituality, culture, inter-faith harmony, health care and ecology. To this end, it sponsors medical care programs, schools, *gurukuls*/orphanages, training centers, large-scale spiritual and cultural events, tree-plantation and clean-up programs, conferences geared toward inter-faith harmony, summer camps, and international youth awareness programs. Additionally, IHRF spon-

sors (both financially and otherwise) educational institutions that are already established but suffering from lack of resources.

Following are examples of only a few of the numerous ways that IHRF's arms embrace humanity:

Y.E.S. – Youth Education Services

Many villages throughout India are oceans of poverty and illiteracy. The influx of technology, commerce, education and metropolitanism that has flooded most of India's cities since independence seems to have not even touched these villages. They exist as they did centuries ago. However, one crucial change has occurred. Now, basic education and marketable skills are absolute necessities in order to subsist in even the smallest communities. Hence, those who lack this education and training go to sleep hungry each night.

In the midst of this ocean of destitution, there are islands of light, islands of knowledge, islands of hope. The Y.E.S. schools are some of these islands. The Y.E.S. program encompasses dozens of children's schools, women's vocational training programs (including sewing, handicrafts, tailoring and fashion designing as well as adult literacy education), and two orphanages/*gurukuls*. These schools are located in Rishikesh, Swargashram, Rani Pokhri, Lucknow, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Uttarkashi, as well as other areas of the Himalayas and North-East India.

The children and women in the Y.E.S. program are given not only an education, but they are also given the priceless gifts of hope and faith.

The Y.E.S. program is dedicated to providing poor and orphaned children a positive, nurturing environ-



ment, and to giving them the chance to live a life free from destitution or despair.

Gurukuls/Orphanages



One visit to India is sufficient to see the urgent, dire need for orphanages and homes for underprivileged children. However, simple shelters with food, beds and babysitters are not sufficient.

These children need not only to be fed and sheltered. Rather, they also need to be educated and trained so they can become productive members of society. They need to be inculcated with values, ethics and spirituality which will make them torchbearers of Indian culture.

Our three *Gurukuls/Orphanages* serve as places where nearly 500 children are housed as well as educated, cultured and filled with crucial values such as non-violence, truth, and *seva*.

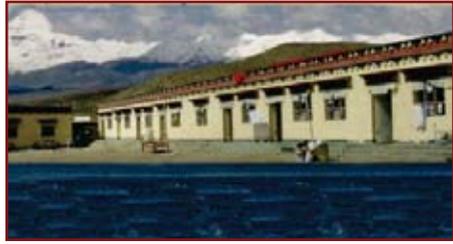


Their days are filled with academic and computer studies, *yoga*, meditation, Vedic chanting, reading of scriptures, *seva* and special programs, such as the performance of dramas based on Indian spiritual history, designed to instill in them essential *sanskaras*. Renamed *rishikumars*, the children travel on *yatra* to the Himalayas and perform *yagna* and prayers every night on the banks of Mother Ganga.

Looks of hopelessness have become looks of optimism and hope. Lightless eyes have become bright, shining eyes. Feelings of destitution and despair have become feelings of pride, faith and enthusiasm.

Mansarover Ashrams and Clinic

Under the guidance, inspiration and vision of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, IHRF has built three ashrams and a medical clinic in the holy land of Lake Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash in Tibet.



Prior to this project, there were no indoor lodging facilities nor medical facilities for hundreds of kilometers. People frequently suffered from basic, treatable ailments due to lack of medical attention. Therefore, after undertaking a *yatra* to the sacred land in 1998, Pujya Swamiji took a vow that – by the grace of God – He would do something for the local people (who don't even have running water) and for all the pilgrims who travel there.

The ashram (tourist rest house) and clinic on the banks of Lake Mansarovar were officially inaugurated in July 2003. We have also built two halls there where *satsang*, meditation and many other divine activities can take place.

Additionally, we have built an ashram in Paryang, Tibet, on the way to Mansarovar, the place where every *yatri* stays one day prior to reaching Mansarovar. This ashram was inaugurated in June 2006.

A third ashram has been built in Dirapuk, on the sacred Mt. Kailash *Parikrama* route, at the unprecedented altitude of 17,000 feet, and



was inaugurated in September 2009. Dirapuk is the place where all pilgrims spend the first night of the two-night, fifty-two kilometer, treacherous *parikrama*. At this location, the *darshan* of Mt. Kailash is the clearest, closest, and most spectacular.

Additionally, we have pledged our support and assistance to the local villagers of Mansarovar.

The project is truly the grace of God and is a divine gift to this holy land, to all Tibetans who live there, and to all the pious pilgrims who cross oceans and continents in order to have a glimpse of the abode of Lord Shiva.



Tsunami Relief

On the 30th of December, 2004, Pujya Swamiji, Vivek Oberoi, Sadhvi Bhagwati, *Rishikumars* from Parmarth Niketan's *Gurukul* and Vivek Oberoi's family traveled down to South India in the wake of the devastating tsunami. Upon seeing the devastation wrought upon the land, they decided to stay and offer both short-term and long-term assistance. The relief work ranged from immediate, emergency measures to the permanent reconstruction of entire villages.

Phase I – Immediate, Emergency Relief Measures

1. Construction of 100 new, temporary homes



2. Establishment and running of seven community kitchens where thousands of families received fresh, hot meals, including milk for children
3. Medical Relief Centers operated at each of the kitchens
4. Playground for the children
5. Free Eye and Cataract Operation Camp for hundreds of villagers



6. Wide-scale distribution of necessities to thousands of people, including food, water, clothing, cooking supplies, shoes, and sheets
7. Repair of over 100 boats and purchase of 15 new boats
8. Purchase of over 600 new fishing nets

Phase II – Permanent Village Reconstruction in Pondicherry

Project Hope undertook the reconstruction of villages Pannithittu and Pattincheri in Pondicherry, totaling over 350 homes. Pannithittu, built through the generosity of Rotary International, Sadeh Lok, UK, Himjyoti Foundation and many other generous donors, was inaugurated in December 2005 by the hands of the Honorable Governors of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Uttarakhand.



The village of Pattincheri, sponsored by Shri LN Mittal of London, was inaugurated in April 2007.



***Phase III – Cuddalore Town,
Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu:
Orphanage and Women’s Center***



The final stage in the work was completed and inaugurated on May 12, 2007. The orphanage which we built for the tsunami orphans as well as facilities for over 300

children who had been orphaned prior to the tsunami was inaugurated by H.E. the Honorable Governor of Tamil Nadu, Shri Surjit Singh Barnalaji with Puja Swamiji.



The orphanage includes dormitory facilities, school rooms, a computer center, medical room, beautiful kitchen and dining facilities, a vocational training center and more. It has been built on the same land as the previously existing home for approximately 200 widowed/abandoned women, which we also beautified. In this way, the orphaned children



will receive, in addition to the staff, mothers, aunts, grandmothers and older sisters; the women will receive the priceless gift of caring for orphaned children. We have also built a vocational training center for the women, and the new huge dining/kitchen facilities are shared by both the children and the women.

Rural Development Program

We are running a rural development program in a town called Veerpur, on the banks of the Ganges, three kilometers south of Rishikesh. The following are components of the rural development program:

Water facilities – Although the town lies on the banks of the Ganga River, most people had no running water or water for their farms. We dug a boring well and have brought running water to this village.

Tree plantation program

Construction of a proper road in the village



Organic Gardening program – We have started a special organic farming program as well. We have brought in trained organic farmers and scientists to teach the local farmers alternative, chemical-free methods of farming. Further, we will have a special “buy back” program with them where we will buy back from them all of their crops. In addition, the ashram at

Veerpur has its own organic farm.

Women's Vocational training program

Sewage Control and Sanitation programs – We have laid sewage lines in the village and constructed toilets for the villagers so that no pollution goes into Ganga.

Spirituality and Culture – We have started an evening devotional ceremony there on the banks of the Ganges, called *Aarti*. It is a way for the villagers to come together in a spirit of peace, culture & piety.

Gurukul / orphanage – The second of the three *gurukuls*/orphanages is here in Veerpur, and we have plans to open an orphanage for girls here as well.

Project Give Back

With the motto “*Give Back, Feel Good,*” Project Give Back is working to bring medical, environmental and engineering *seva* to the people of rural India by experts and professionals from around the globe. So far, we have been active in organizing and running various free medical camps in the villages of the Himalayas themselves, bringing medical care to the people. Doctors from all over the world of all different specialities come to beautifully donate their skills and expertise to the patients, who usually cannot afford such care, as well as distribute free medicines, glasses and other medical equipment to the patients.

There is also an effort to better educate people to maintain health and



hygiene. We are also working on the establishment of a model village in Veerpur which can serve as a model of environmental preservation and integrity, and which we will then expand into other rural areas.

IHRF is dedicated to bringing food to the hungry, medicine to the sick, and peace to the troubled.

IHRF does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, caste, gender or nationality.

All of its services are open to all & free to all.

GANGA ACTION PARIVAR

Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) was founded by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, and is a world family dedicated to serving Mother Ganga. GAP intends to restore, protect and maintain the River Ganga and Her tributaries in their *aviral* (free-flowing) and *nirmal* (unpolluted) states. Under Pujya Swamiji's guidance and leadership, numerous organizations, scientists, environmentalists, activists, government officials and volunteers are coming together to bring this noble goal to fruition.

GAP was first launched on April 4th, 2010 at a special "Sparsh Ganga" event at Parmarth Niketan Ashram by the hands of Pujya Swamiji, H.H. the Dalai Lama and many revered saints. The event raised awareness about the



need for collective and holistic, solution-based action to address the crucial issues facing the holy river. Many were present to show their support and share their love and dedication towards our environment, and the massive event included participants pledging to help protect and restore the Ganga.



Under Pujya Swamiji's guidance and leadership, numerous organizations, scientists, environmentalists, activists, government officials and volunteers are coming together to bring this noble goal to fruition.

Activities of Ganga Action Parivar range from working with top government leaders and institutions to create and implement sustainable, environmentally-friendly solutions for the various, complex problems facing Ganga, to working at the grassroots levels. Various projects of GAP include building eco-friendly toilets, planting trees, implementing trash management systems, holding local clean-up programs to help educate all about the importance of the environment and the urgent need to live “green,” and much more.



To learn more about all of Ganga Action Parivar's numerous projects, please visit www.gangaaction.org.



PARMARTH NIKETAN ASHRAM RISHIKESH (HIMALAYAS), INDIA

H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji is the President of Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, India, a true, spiritual haven, lying on the holy banks of Mother Ganga, in the lap of the lush Himalayas.

Parmarth Niketan is the largest ashram in Rishikesh. Parmarth Niketan provides its thousands of pilgrims – who come from all corners of the Earth – with a clean, pure and sacred atmosphere as well as abundant, beautiful gardens. With over 1,000 rooms, the facilities are a perfect blend of modern amenities and traditional, spiritual simplicity.

The daily activities at Parmarth Niketan include morning universal prayers, daily *yoga* and meditation classes, daily *satsang* and lecture programs, *kirtan*, world renowned Ganga *arti* at sunset, as well as





full Nature Cure, and Ayurvedic treatment available on the premises.

Additionally, there are frequently special cultural and spiritual programs given by visiting revered saints, acclaimed musicians, spiritual and social leaders and others.

Further, there are frequent camps in which pilgrims come from across the world to partake in intensive courses on *yoga*, meditation, *pranayama*, stress management, acupuncture, Reiki and other ancient Indian sciences. Parmarth Niketan hosts the annual International Yoga Festival from the 1st-7th of March every year, in cooperation with the Government of Uttarakhand.

Parmarth Niketan's charitable activities and services make no distinctions on the basis of caste, color, gender, creed or nationality. Instead they emphasize unity, harmony, peace, global integrity, health, and the holistic connection between the body, mind and spirit.

True to its name, Parmarth Niketan is dedicated to the welfare of all. Everything is open and free to all.

PLEDGE TO BE A VEGETARIAN

YES! I care about the pain of animals.

YES! I care about world hunger.

YES! I care about Planet Earth.

YES! I want to live a life of non-violence.

For these reasons I pledge to eliminate the following foods from my diet:

Meat

Chicken

Fish

Eggs

I know that my decision may be difficult, but I am proud to make my food choices a statement of love, care and compassion for the world and for all the living beings with whom I share this planet.

Name:

Address:

Email:

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Address:

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TO:

Pujya Swami Chidanand Sarawatiji
Parmarth Niketan
P.O. Swargashram
Rishikesh (Himalayas)
Uttarakhand – 249 304
INDIA



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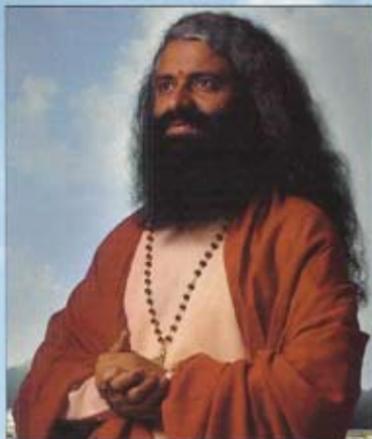
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VEGETARIANISM:

FOR YOUR BODY, YOUR MIND,
YOUR SOUL AND YOUR PLANET



H. H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji

Across the industrialized world, everyone is talking about what we can do to save the planet. Ecological conservation has become a household word. There are thousands of programs dedicated to feeding the millions of starving children. Yet, while we may talk about wanting to save the planet or feed the hungry, these words are empty if our actions are in sharp contrast. We may not be able to carry crates of food to the deserts of Africa. We may not be able to re-plant every tree that has been cut down in the forest. But, we can refuse to allow it to continue. We can refuse to partake of the cruelty. For, each time we eat meat, we are saying that we approve of the suffering in the world. Let us take the opposite stance. Let us -- each one of us -- make each meal an act of service to the world. Each time we eat grain instead of meat, let us realize that we are letting 16 times as many people be fed, that we are saving precious trees in the rainforest, that we are conserving Mother Earth's water. From now on, let our actions match our words!