



# Ahimsa

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Newsletter of the Young Indian Vegetarians  
Summer 2017 | Issue 60



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Welcome to another issue of Ahimsa

## The rise and rise of veganism!

There are over 500,000 vegans in the UK. According to the Vegan Society the number of vegans has grown three times since 2006, making veganism the fastest growing lifestyle. It is the young people who are taking up this lifestyle in huge numbers. Nearly 50% of 16-24 year olds are shunning dairy milk consumption. Milk consumption fell by 6 million pints in 2016. The sale of unsweetened almond milk has risen by 2,343% since 2015 - the equivalent of over 265 thousand litres or around 3,300 baths full! In January 2017 a whopping 59,500 people agreed to go vegan for a month for the Veganuary campaign.

Evolution is a vegan and conscious living festival bringing people together vegans and non-vegans for a day of education and connection. Last year's festival at Oval Space was the biggest European vegan conference to have happened. This year's event promises to be even bigger. Linda McCartney vegetarian sausages and CO YO natural dairy-free coconut milk yogurt have seen their sales soar by 2000%! Alpro Vanilla soya custard, Rakusen's non-dairy chocolate digestives and Booja-Booja Hunky Punky chocolate ice cream have all seen sales soar.

In the US popular media outlet Forbes writer Michael Pellman Rowland claims that plant-based milk is

effectively bringing down the dairy industry. A group of Congressmen from dairy-producing states want the word 'milk' banned from plant-based products. Market research studies predict that the plant based milk industry will reach \$35 billion in the US by 2024! 2016 saw Silicon Valley start-up Hampton Creek, a plant-based food company, valued at 1 billion dollars by investors. 2016 also saw the launch of New Crop Capital the world's first humane venture capital fund that will support businesses and campaigners working on animal rights issues.

Increasingly the British public try to avoid using any items derived from, or that involve animals. So leather, wool and products that involve experiments on animals like shampoo are all avoided. More and more, people avoid going to meat restaurants even if they offer vegetarian and vegan options. For these reasons vegan fashion is also taking off. Companies like vegan watch company Votch, Matt & Nat and Beyond Skin are making it vogue to opt for vegan leather.

Having said all that there are many millions of meat eaters and we will continue persuading them to go vegetarian. Once they go vegetarian we will tell them of the benefits of going vegan. I do not believe that it is vegan or nothing! There is also a huge amount of animal abuse going on in the form of experiments on animals, hunting, horse racing, export of live animals and abandoned animals - the list is endless. We have to be proactive in bringing about a better world for animals. There are animal sanctuaries run by most dedicated individuals you will ever meet. They need our support too. So I call upon vegetarian, vegan and animal rights groups to work together so that we can reach a maximum number of people.

*Nitin Mehta*

### **The Young Indian Vegetarians**

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

## Great news from India 52 Beagles rescued from labs find homes in Hyderabad; 180 more to be freed.

March 2017



Union minister Maneka Gandhi passed an amendment to Schedule Y of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, sparing animal testing for new drug registrations. Earlier, animal testing was required even when the complete data from earlier toxicity experiments already existed for drugs approved in other countries.

Following the ruling a total of 52 beagles were released by pharmaceutical companies in Hyderabad and brought to the Blue Cross

animal shelter in the city. They had been living in a cage for all their lives at different pharmaceutical labs. They were subjected to experiments, aiding research that was supposed to save human lives.

"They were terrified when they came in the open," said Kavita Kumari, shelter director, Blue Cross. The dogs were bred in captivity but took a quick liking to the sand filled playground next to their kennel. "We have conducted medical tests on the dogs to ascertain their health. We are also providing them with special food. The dogs are all healthy," she added. What kind of tests were done on the dogs is confidential said Nita Paropkari, a volunteer at Blue Cross. "The pharma companies only reveal that information to the regulatory bodies only," she said.

Out of 52 beagles over 20 have been adopted. Over 180 more beagles were also released at a later date. Beagles, a dog species, are submissive. Their obedience and trusting nature make them ideal candidates for biomedical laboratories. The dogs are small in size allowing research facilities to house more of them. The animal testing did on the dogs would include force-feeding, injection, or skin applications to measure toxicity for cosmetics, cancer and other research studies.

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## Taiwan Bans Consumption of Dog and Cat Meat

Taiwan has become the first country in Asia to ban the consumption of dog and cat meat, as increasing pet ownership across the continent has seen attitudes shift. The revised Animal Protection Act imposes a fine of up to 250,000 Taiwan dollars (£6,500) for eating dog or cat meat, while the penalties for animal cruelty or slaughter were raised to up to two years in prison and fines of up to 2m Taiwan dollars (£52,000). Repeat offenders can be jailed for up to five years and face stiffer fines, and those convicted under the new law may also be publicly shamed, with their names and photos published by the government. The law also makes it illegal to "walk" a pet while riding a scooter or driving a car. Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, is a well-known cat lover, frequently posing with her two cats during her campaign. She also adopted three retired guide dogs. The most notorious mass slaughter of dogs for food occurs once a year in China during the Yulin dog meat festival. About 10,000 dogs are killed every year and eaten throughout the southern city of Yulin.

## Did You Know?

1. According to one study men who regularly eat fatty meats and cheese are more likely to develop an aggressive, often fatal form of prostate cancer, while going vegan is linked to a 35% lower risk of cancer.
2. Undercooked chicken can harbour the bacteria that causes Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS), the nervous disorder characterised by muscle weakness, coordination problems and unsteadiness, and may even lead to paralysis. The bacteria causing this are *Campylobacter jejuni*. These bacteria are also resistant to antibiotics. *C.jejuni* infects more than a million people in the US every year. It is also a trigger for other autoimmune disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease and Reiter's arthritis.
3. Since 1988, \$3.5 billion have been paid out to the vaccine-injured by the US National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.
4. The Coca-Cola Company produced more than 100 billion plastic bottles in 2016.
5. As early as the 1920s, Coca-Cola boasted that it was the largest consumer of sugar and processed caffeine in the world.
6. Coca-Cola uses 300 billion litres of water a year at its bottling plants. Coca-Cola has a massive ecological footprint. Avoid Coca-Cola for your health and the planet.
7. It has been estimated that on current trends, by 2050 the plastic in our oceans may weigh more than all the fish.
8. A new organ has been found in the digestive system called the mesentery. It is a double sheet of tissue connecting the intestines to the stomach. According to Professor J. Calvin Coffey, a surgeon at the University of Limerick, Ireland no one really knows what it does. Urgent research is needed to find out its role in the human body.
9. 1-2.7 trillion fish are killed annually for human consumption.
10. Drug giant Pfizer was fined a record £84.2 million for imposing a 2,600% price increase on its anti-epilepsy drug Epanutin. Some drugs in the US can have over 500,000% mark up!
11. ESRD (end-stage renal disease) is the final stage of chronic kidney disease by which time the patient needs to be on dialysis or have a kidney transplant. Researchers at the Duke-National University of Singapore Medical School discovered a strong association between consumption of red meat and risk of ESRD. Those who ate most red meat had a 40% greater risk of getting the disease than those who ate the least red meat.
12. Cats and dogs continue to breathe and blink for 5 minutes after they are skinned alive for their fur.
13. Diet-related diseases cost the US around \$211 billion annually.
14. Cornwall's famous dolphin population is being wiped by fishing boats. A total of 4,000 dolphins died this spring. At least 100,000 have been killed over the last 20 years. By-catch is a term used for unwanted sea creatures caught in commercial fishing nets. Dolphins trapped in fishing nets suffer trauma, amputation of fins or tail fluke, broken jaws, perforation at the rear of mandible, as well as rope marks on the skin. Another reason not to eat fish.
15. Around 2.3 million birds covering 153 species were killed illegally across Cyprus last autumn. Around 800,000 songbirds including blackcaps, robins, and garden warblers were illegally killed on a British army base in Cyprus. Birds are trapped in nets.
16. 1.4 billion litres of sewage leaked into the River Thames between 2013 and 2014.



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*Contact: Chandrakant Patel*





## Ban the Grand National!

Animal Aid has campaigned hard for many years to stop the immense cruelty involved in the horseracing industry. The organisation has catalogued the number of horses that have died in the racing industry since March 2007. The number recorded to date is 1564 deaths. Horses are made to run and jump fences while carrying the rider on its back. Once they are unable to race, many horses are neglected and suffer painful deaths. Do not go to horse racing events and do not lay bets on horse racing.

Visit: [www.horsedeathwatch.com](http://www.horsedeathwatch.com)

## Meat consumption is causing deadly diseases says study published by BMA.

The British Medical Journal has published a study of half a million Americans showing that the risk of dying from cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, infections, kidney disease, liver disease and lung disease all increased with the amount of meat consumed. Back in 2015, the World Health Organisation declared processed meat as 'carcinogenic to humans'. It concluded that each 50g portion of processed meat a day increased the chance of bowel cancer by 18%. Pancreatic and stomach cancers are also similarly linked. All meat contains heme iron and processed meat has nitrates and nitrites (which give meat the red colour). The authors of the study hypothesise that these additions cause oxidative stress, which means that our cells are less able to defend themselves from free radicals and age prematurely.

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- ✈ East Africa - 18 Days 01/09
- ✈ Sri Lanka - 11 Days 06/11
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- ✈ Swiss Delight - 6 Days 23/08
- ✈ Eastbourne - 3 Days 25/08, 08/09

### HINDU PILGRIMAGE 2017 - 18

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## Philosopher-activist Tom Regan, preeminent advocate of animal rights, passes away aged 78

Horried by the tragic loss of innocent human life in the then-ongoing Vietnam War, a young philosopher by the name of Tom Regan went to the university library and buried himself in books on war, violence, and human rights, determined to prove that the American involvement in the war was morally wrong. One day, he picked up Mohandas K. Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Reading it with great care and interest, he must have come across the following lines: "To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man." Little did he know that this literary encounter with Gandhi would change his life forever and have a lasting and profound impact on the history of moral philosophy. He asked himself, "How can I oppose the unjustified killing of human beings in Vietnam and at the same time fill my freezer with the dead body parts of innocent animals?" Shortly thereafter, in 1975, he wrote his first article on the moral status of animals. As its title, he chose "The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism", the same title as that of a 1959 essay by Gandhi. He argued that vegetarianism and, more generally, the idea of animal rights are not the products of excessive sentimentality they are often perceived to be, but rather "have a rational foundation". In the decades that followed, he further developed and defended that argument in more than twenty books, hundreds of articles, and countless public lectures across the globe, and became one of the philosophical leaders of the animal rights movement. In a telling reminder that the power of ideas knows no national or



cultural boundaries, he wrote later in his life: "I think it is fair to say that I would never have become an animal rights advocate if I had not read... [Gandhi's] autobiography." On February 17th 2017, Tom Regan passed away. He died of pneumonia at his home in Raleigh, North Carolina at the age of 78. Regan's most notable book, *The Case for Animal Rights* was first published in 1983 and has since been translated into several languages. It contains the most comprehensive account of his theory of animal rights and played a crucial role in establishing the intellectual respectability of the animal rights movement. With more than 400 pages of dense philosophical reasoning, it is not an easy book to read, but the basic argument is not difficult to understand: If all human beings have equal rights, as virtually everybody agrees they do, these rights must be based on a relevant similarity between them. That similarity cannot be the fact that all human beings are members of the same species, as it would be no less arbitrary to base rights on species membership than on being of a certain gender or race. Rationality, the ability to use language, and moral agency, features we like to think make us special among the animals, are not plausible candidates either. After all, there are some of us, such as young children

and people with certain severe cognitive impairments, who are incapable of rational thought, language-use, and moral agency. The relevant similarity Regan argues is that each one of us is an experiencing subject of a life, a one-of-a-kind individual with a unique life story. But so are many non-human animals, which he explained with his characteristic eloquence at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in 1989, with an estimated audience of one million people watching the BBC live broadcast: "The other animals humans eat, use in science, hunt, trap, and exploit in a variety of other ways have a life of their own that is of importance to them, apart from their utility to us. Each has a life that fares experientially better or worse for the one whose life it is. Like us, they bring a unified psychological presence to the world. Like us, they are some bodies, not something's. In these fundamental ways, the non-human animals in labs and on farms, for example, are the same as human beings." We must hence accept, on pain of inconsistency, that these animals, too, have moral rights, including the right not

to be killed or made to suffer. The practical implications of this view are nothing short of radical and include, most importantly, the total abolition of the use of animals as experimental subjects and as sources of food, clothing, and entertainment. Combining scholarly rigour and dispassionate attention to philosophical detail with the infectious passion of moral conviction, Regan was as close to the ideal of a moral philosopher as only very few others. He was also a wonderful person and one of the kindest people I ever knew. While he will be missed by many, I take comfort in knowing that his words will endure, calling on us to treat animals with the respect they are due, and continue to inspire generations to come.

*The writer of this article Dr. Rainer Ebert is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa and an Associate Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. You can follow him on Twitter: @rainer\_ebert.*

## Israeli army caters for a growing number of Vegan soldiers!

An estimated 50,000 Israel Defense Forces soldiers will be fed by the vegan rations, which consist of "hummus and tahini, beans in tomato sauce, cocoa spread, halva, green olives, peas and canned fruit," Lieutenant Colonel Donna Steinfeld with the IDF's Technology and Logistics Division told Jerusalem Online.

"Our goal is to take care of each soldier's personal needs." Steinfeld also said that a large number of soldiers had requested the program. The IDF made several allowances to accommodate the large vegan minority in 2014, such as leather-free combat gear. Soldiers were also granted an allowance to buy their own meals rather than the typical food served on base, and vegan options were added to mess hall menus. Veganism is highly popular in Israel, with 4% of the population identifying as vegan – the highest rate of any country in the world. Experts attribute this phenomenon to it being a natural extension of the kosher Jewish dietary code, which already prohibits some meat products, like pork and shellfish.





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# Mother Earth

Mother Earth sustains human beings as well as all living beings and yet we do not give it the care or the love that we owe it. One tablespoon of soil contains more organisms than there are people on Earth: billions of bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms combine with minerals, water, air and organic matter to create a living system that supports plants and, in turn, all life. Healthy soil can store as much as 3,750 tonnes of water per hectare, reducing the risk of flooding. A huge amount of soil degradation is going on all over the world. The UK loses 2.9 million tonnes of topsoil a year; it is blown away and washed into our rivers and seas along with chemicals, pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. Rivers of contaminated mud are pouring into our oceans and we are losing a third of our topsoil to erosion. Over the last 50 years agriculture has become increasingly dependent on chemical fertiliser NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium). However, this fertiliser has a detrimental effect on the long-term health of the land; research suggests that there are fewer than 100 harvests left in many of the world's soils. Entire civilisations

have disappeared due to soil erosion. The Dust Bowl erosion of Great Plains in the 1930s was the result of the policies that led to grassland - which traps moisture and holds the soil together - being converted to arable land for cultivated crops. The soils blew away in great Aeolian dust clouds and famine followed. Meat consumption is one of the biggest causes of this state of affairs. For a human population of 6.5 billion almost 85 billion animals are raised every year for meat. Mother Earth cannot sustain these numbers. Almost 40% of world's cereals are fed to animals. If human beings were to turn vegetarian and vegan it would take a huge amount of pressure off Mother Earth. The alternative is mass starvation, loss of rainforests and climate catastrophe making many parts of the world uninhabitable and causing wars, disease and death. We owe it to future generations to live the planet in a habitable way.

*Information courtesy Ellen Ray, co-director,  
Soils in Crisis*

The following successful events took place since the last newsletter.

1. On 2nd July 2016 I attended the AGM of League Against Cruel Sports. I presented Mahaveer Awards to Roger Swaine and Darryl Cunningham. Both were attacked whilst monitoring an illegal fox hunt.
2. On 18th September we kept a stall at Croydon Ecology Centre's annual summer fayre.
3. On 2 October I travelled to Sheringham, Norfolk. My host was our long time supporter Ravi Pandya. He had organised a talk at St. Peter's Church as part of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary celebrations. We also visited the Hilltop Animal Sanctuary.
3. On 10th October I represented Animal Interfaith Alliance at a meeting organised by Act Asia in parliament. Act Asia does tremendous work for animals in China.
4. On 22nd and 23rd October we kept a stall at the VegFest event in Olympia, Kensington.
5. On 11th November I gave a talk at the Jaspar Centre in Harrow.
6. On 11th December we had our 36th annual Christmas lunch. Croydon North MP and leader of the council Tony Newman were among over 100 people who attended.
7. On 8th January 2017 I gave a talk at the Om Centre in Shepherds Bush. Swami Nirpilanandji has been running this temple for many years and has a congregation of Hindus from Trinidad and Guyana.
8. On 28th January I kept a stall in a Bexleyheath school. The local Hindu community was celebrating India's Republic Day.
9. On 25th March I gave a talk at the Yoga and Vegan Festival held at the Guildhall in Kingston-Upon-Thames. A special thanks to Kriti Sachdev and her team for organising this event.
10. On 29th May we took part in a demonstration to oppose the Conservative proposal to give a free vote on making fox hunting legal. This Conservative policy must have cost them a lot of votes because the party did abysmally in the elections!
11. On 23rd July I was interviewed on Sunday Morning Live on BBC1 regarding the Hindu perspective on animal rights. Thanks to Sanjay Jagatia for organising it.



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## It is wrong to use captive animals for human entertainment

According to a study by the University of Oxford's Wildlife Research Unit around 550,000 animals are in captivity at wildlife entertainment venues worldwide. Animals in zoos and circuses are greatly distressed. Dolphins, which are kept in tanks for humans to 'share hugs and dance with', suffer mental, emotional and physical stress, and the death rate for infant whales and dolphins is high.



## Joan Court

Veteran animal rights campaigner and author passed away in November 2016, aged 97. In 1945 she went to India to work as a nurse in Kolkata. In 1946 aged 19, she worked with Gandhi in his campaign for Indian independence. She attended his prayer meetings and walked with him in villages. Based in Cambridge from 1977, she became active in the animal rights movement. At the age of 86 she went on an expedition with the Sea Shepherd Marine Conservation Society to monitor the hunting of whales by Japanese vessels. In 2008 she received RSPCA's Lord Erskine Award for her work for animals. She was also an author of many books including one called 'The Bunny Hugging Terrorist'. She was a fearless and daring campaigner exposing the vivisection activities of Oxford and Cambridge universities. When I visited her a few years ago in Cambridge she was surrounded by the many cats she had. She cooked for me aubergine curry and rice! Many years ago Joan and friends spent 5 days and nights outside the ministry of agriculture and fisheries building. They did not eat anything as a protest against the export of animals. I was privileged to serve them a hot breakfast on the day they ended the fast. I still recall the sight of them all on a pavement having their first food after 5 days. It was a very emotional moment for all of us. In 1999 Joan was presented with a Mahaveer Award at a vegetarian rally we held in Hyde Park. We shall continue in Joan's footsteps. Future generations will look at her dedication for the cause of animal liberation and will be inspired.



## Andrew Tyler, director of Animal Aid, passes away

Andrew passed away on 28th April 2017 aged 70. It is a great loss to the animal rights movement in this country. Andrews concern and compassion for animals was unparalleled. Under his leadership Animal Aid became a powerful campaigning organisation. From exposing institutions carrying out cruel experiments on primates and other animals to the plight of horses in the horseracing industry, to campaigning for CCTV cameras in slaughterhouses, Andrew left no stone unturned. Well before veganism became mainstream Animal Aid, under the leadership of Andrew, was promoting it as a crucial component of eradicating animal cruelty. It was real pleasure to see Andrew every year at the London Christmas Fair held at Kensington Town Hall. Andrew was a legend and inspired a whole new generation to campaign for animal rights. As Animal Aid celebrates its 40th anniversary this year Andrew will be remembered for his immense contribution to the cause of animals.

**The following people agreed to go vegetarian or vegan at the VegFest event held at Kensington, Olympia on 22 and 23 October 2016**

**Karen:** agreed to give up fish.

**Jessica, Adam, Mariyah, Narmadha:** all agreed to go vegetarian.

**Jessica, Bhargav, Hursula, Amy, Harriet, Kimberley, Zivile, Laila and Jamil:** all agreed to go vegan



## Kenya Vegetarian Club on a tree planting drive

Trees clean the air, they provide oxygen, give shelter from the sweltering heat, cool the atmosphere, make a place habitable, conserve energy, save water, prevent pollution, ward off soil erosion, provide food and wood and also create habitats for wildlife. Trees are indeed a precious resource for mankind. An average size tree creates sufficient oxygen in one year to provide oxygen for a family of four. Planting trees in the right place around buildings and homes can cut air-conditioning costs up to 50%. This helps in reducing global warming directly. Planting trees for the environment is good as they are renewable, biodegradable and recyclable. Studies show that if we plant 20 million trees, the earth will get 260 million more tons of oxygen. One acre of trees can remove up to 2.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. During photosynthesis, trees and other plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. One report says that in one year, an acre of mature trees absorb the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced by a car driven 26,000 miles. Planting trees is important as they are the natural habitat of animals and birds, as well as many endangered species. Planting trees means

more wood and paper products, which can be easily recycled. A newly planted whole forest can change tonnes of atmospheric carbon into wood and other fibrous tissue, thus reducing global warming. Kenya Vegetarian Club has been planting trees across Kenya for a few years. The Club identifies the farmers who can actually nurture them and donates the trees accordingly. So far we have donated more than ten thousand saplings to needy farmers. Kenya Vegetarian Club is planning to plant a hundred trees in every school in Kenya. There are more than ten thousand schools in Kenya. So far, the KVC team has planted 450 trees in various schools in Kibigori area. KVC also donated 450 trees to Oroba Primary School, Wook Primary School, Mingange Primary School and Waware Primary School. Trees were also donated to Miranga Dispensary in Milani. KVC has also organised a drive to plant trees in and around the Shiv Temple area in Kibigori. It is the dream of the Founder of KVC Vaishali Shah to plant at least a billion trees during her lifetime.

*Vaishali Shah*

*Founder of Kenya Vegetarian Club with school children.*

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## Farmer Jay Wilde sends his animals to a sanctuary after becoming vegetarian

Jay Wilde, 59, moved his herd of 70 cattle to the sanctuary more than 150 miles from his farm in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, as he could not bear to see them killed. In the herd there are 30 pregnant cows and others with calves at foot. The 59-year-old organic farmer felt so guilty taking his cattle to slaughter that he completely changed his business, growing wheat to be used for bread instead. The animals have been taken by Hilltop Animal Sanctuary in Norwich. We send the sanctuary £500 a month.





## Jayesh Patel - a personal journey towards becoming an animal rights activist.



My journey on the road to speaking up against the unimaginable suffering of animals caused by humans started when I learned about the abuse they are subjected to for the sake of our gluttony and vanity (use of leather, fur, wool and silk).

Unfortunately, I did not know of their plight and my complicity in the crimes against them until my son Rishi told me about the living torture of the humble dairy cow. Having been a vegetarian all my life, as I did not want to harm animals for my culinary pleasure, and practicing Ahimsa (do no harm), I felt a sense of moral and ethical wellbeing until at the age of 49 years old I was suddenly disabused of my misplaced righteousness.

For too long I had been hoodwinked by the dairy industry and its "happy" cows marketing lies that have been peddled through the media. So much so that I had no idea that a cow is like any female mammal that has to be pregnant and give birth to a baby for it to lactate and produce milk, the milk that is needed for her babies to grow but that we consume instead. Of course, I was so brainwashed that I had no idea about the cows being artificially impregnated, their babies being shot (if male) or stolen from them to become milk slaves (if female).

I went vegan pretty much overnight once I knew the truth. So, whilst my biological age is 50

my vegan life is a mere 1 year old! I went vegan for the animals, and I feel reborn and at peace knowing that each night I go to sleep having not knowingly and unnecessarily harmed innocent beings. The enormous bene-fits to my health (significantly reduced blood sugar, cholesterol, weight etc is due to giving up saturated animal fat and protein). My carbon footprint and impact on environmental destruction has been dramatically reduced. I am now an animal rights activist and take part in vegan education events every week up and down the country. I speak to the public about the truth - the story of animal suffering, the horror of the process that starts in the farms and ends up on the breakfast, lunch and dinner plates in terms of dairy products and/or meat. I feel the need to provide the public with the facts so that they do not make purchasing decisions based on the milk, egg, fish and meat industry propaganda. The public reaction is similar to the one I had - shock, horror, distress, guilt etc. But, it is also true, that a lifetime of social conditioning stemming from taste, tradition, culture and convenience is difficult to overturn. This, unfortunately, is hypocrisy personified and we cannot and must not stay silent or else our children and history will judge us as inhumane from the perspective of animal suffering and reckless in terms of the destruction of the planet.

*Jayesh Patel*

### Kathy Silk

Kathy Silk who was the heart and soul of Croydon Vegetarian Society as well as the Vegetarian Society of UK in the 70's and 80's passed away in July 2017. It was a time when people did not know of the huge varieties of delicious food that can be prepared without meat. Kathy filled that gap with recipe books and cookery classes. We were together at the world vegetarian congress in Israel in 1989.

## Farmed Fish Nightmare

As the oceans of the world are being wiped out of fish, farmed fish is what human beings are eating. Unable to live in the open waters, fish are confined in enclosures in conditions that are completely unnatural to them. Amongst the many problems facing fish farmers is a small creature called sea louse. It clings to a fish and eats its blood and skin. These lice now infect almost half of Scotland's salmon farms. In 2016 the lice killed thousands of tonnes of farmed fish, caused skin lesions and secondary infections in millions more. It cost the Scottish industry around £300 million. Norway and Canada have similar problems and it is estimated the cost to companies across the world is £1 billion. Around 45 lochs in Scotland have been badly polluted by the antibiotics and pesticides used to control lice. The lice are increasingly resistant to chemicals



and antibiotics, leading to a huge increase in their use and which are now polluting the oceans. Other methods being tried by fish farm companies include pumping the fish through water hot enough to make the lice let go of their hosts to churning them as if in a washing machine. Last year the heating of the water on a Skye fish farm led to the accidental death of 95,000 fish.

*Information from an article by John Vidal in the Guardian, 1 April 2017*



Ahimsa Newsletter presented to Tsewang Namgyal, Indian Ambassador to Cuba (08 September 2016)



Dog shelter in Havana, Cuba, complete with operating theatre (08 September 2016)



At a rally to oppose Conservative plans to bring back fox hunting (29th May 2016)

## YIV is grateful to the following organisations:

1. **Mahavir Foundation, Harrow** for the generous donation of £500. We are really grateful to Vinodbhai Kapashi and all the committee members of the foundation.
2. **Oshwal Association of the UK, East Area** for a donation of £250. This money was collected by the Satsang Mandal. Thank you very much Ashwinbhai and all the committee members.
3. **Jain Samaj Manchester** for a donation of £251. Our thanks to Narendrabhai Vora, Prakashbhai Mehta and all the committee members.
4. **Navnat Vanik Association** for a donation of £300. Thank you, President Dhirubhai Galani, Amitbhai Lathia and all the committee members.
5. **Jain Samaj Europe** for a donation of £1000. For many years now we have had great support from Leicester-based Jain Samaj. A special thanks to President Ushaben Mehta, Dr. Rameshbhai Mehta, Vice President Mauneshbhai and Treasurer Mahendrabhai.
6. **Vanik Council UK**, for a donation of £500. Thank you Manharbhai Mehta and all the committee members.

## We supported the following organisations:

1. Hillside Animal Sanctuary, Norwich. We send £500.00 every month. [www.hillside.org.uk](http://www.hillside.org.uk)
2. Dogs Trust. [www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)
3. Animal Aid. [www.animalaid.org.uk](http://www.animalaid.org.uk)
4. Network for Animals. [www.networkforanimals.org](http://www.networkforanimals.org).
5. OneKind, Scotland. [www.onekind.org](http://www.onekind.org)
6. mare & foal Sanctuary. [www.mareandfoal.org](http://www.mareandfoal.org).
7. APA (Animal Protection Agency). [www.apa.org.uk](http://www.apa.org.uk)
8. Wood Green, the Animal Charity. [www.woodgreen.org.uk](http://www.woodgreen.org.uk)

## Do's and Don'ts

Do persuade others to give up meat.

Do speak the word 'vegetarian' at every opportunity.

Go only to vegetarian restaurants.

Don't wear or buy leather goods, (sofas shoes etc).



**H.H. Acharya Sushil Kumar Ji Maharaj**  
June 15th 1926 - April 22nd 1994

*Guruji Sushil Kumar Maharaj's Instructions*

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Promote vegetarianism and save the animal wealth of India  
from going to slaughterhouses

Organise, unite & fight for ahimsa



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**Mansukhbhai – Sushilaben**

**Divyesh – Anita**

**Ishan – Rohan – Shalin**

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## Ishwar Vishwanath Sharma



Seven-year-old Ishwar, studying at St. Michael's School, Sevenoaks, Kent, has made the Indian community proud in the field of Yoga. He is a living proof that the new generation has a great potential to shape our world for the better. His dedication to yoga is truly inspiring. Ishwar Sharma, whose parents hail from India, is also interested in the Hindu scripts and can chant up to 50 slokas (hymns) from Vedas and the Bhagavad-Gita. Ishwar is a keen vegetarian and promotes it enthusiastically. He thinks that a veggie diet is good for the body and mind. He feels a vegetarian diet can add to the many health benefits of yoga practice. Ishwar also persuades his friends to go vegetarian. Ishwar won the national under 11 UK Yogasana Championships for the second consecutive year in April 2017. He won two gold medals in the World Games Yoga Championship in Nepal in June 2017. This was at individual and artistic level. He has been invited to perform at the European Yoga Championship in November in Prague.

## Vegan Shiv Puja at Croydon Mandir

Vishwa Sanatan Mandir is a small Hindu temple in Croydon. It has scored a first in the UK and maybe the world to have done Shiv Puja with coconut milk! Lord Shiva should be worshipped with coconut milk as it is very auspicious. So it is time now for other temples to follow the example of Vishwa Sanatan Mandir. All the Mandirs should go vegan!

## Veggie London



Prêt a Manger opened its first vegetarian outlet last year in Broadwick St. Soho. It has been a runaway success and it has now opened a second veggie only outlet in Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch. Tibits, the Swiss vegetarian chain, has opened its second branch in London. The address is 124 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SW. And Mildreds, the popular vegetarian eatery is soon opening a new branch in Dalston, East London.

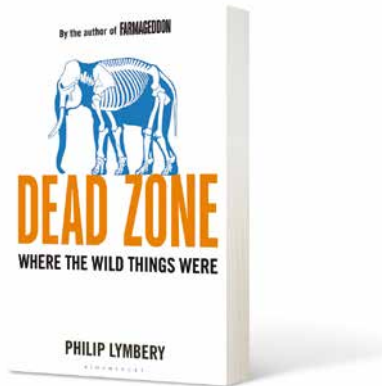
## Germany Bans Meat and Fish at all Official Government Functions



Barbara Hendricks, Germany's federal minister for Environment has passed this edict. She said her ministry has a duty to mitigate against the 'negative effects of meat consumption', and 'must set an example'.

A collage of images related to Vegfest UK London 2017. The top part features a banner that reads "WELCOME TO VEGFEST UK LONDON 2017" and "One of the UK's biggest VEGAN festivals". Below the banner are several images: a burger, a sushi roll, a cupcake, a pizza, a large crowd of people at the festival, and various food items like salads and pastries. At the bottom, there is a date "OCTOBER 21-22-2017" and "OLYMPIA LONDON", along with the website "london.vegfest.co.uk" and logos for sponsors like "Vivo" and "Veggie".

# DEAD ZONE



*Dead Zone- an eye-opener of a book written by Philip Lymbery. Philip is CEO of Compassion in World Farming and author of internationally acclaimed book Farmageddon. Here are some important points I picked up from the book:*

## Food waste

Out of a global population of 7 billion about a billion go hungry. There are many reasons for this. Though the world produces enough food for twice the population much of it is wasted. In developing countries lack of proper grain storage facilities and good transport system causes huge wastage. In the developed world, food is wasted in our homes, in our supermarkets and restaurants. According to Tristram Stuart, a leading authority on food waste, 40% of UK fruit and vegetables are rejected even before they reach the shops - mostly because they do not match the supermarkets' strict cosmetic standards. European countries also waste the meat equivalent of nearly 2 billion farm animals a year -reared, slaughtered and binned. Yet the biggest single area of food waste on the planet is the feeding of crops fit for human consumption to industrially reared animals like cattle. The amount of global land

currently used to grow grains like corn and soya for farm animals is equivalent to a single field covering half the land surface of the USA, or the entire European Union. Worldwide, if the grain-fed animals were restored to pasture and the cereals and soya went to people instead, there would be enough for an extra billion people. According to International Institute for Environment and Development using cropland to produce corn and other crops for animal feed rather than direct for human consumption is 'colossally inefficient'.

## Dead zone

The Gulf of Mexico is the world's second-largest area of oxygen-depleted water. This 'dead zone', the size of Wales means that there is no oxygen below in the water. This drives all marine life towards the surface. As bottom dwellers, shrimp take a heavy hit. They cannot survive in the dead zone and those who do are picked up by fishing trawlers. This is killing the fishing industry as shrimp disappear. According to the US government's scientific agency the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the dead zone costs the US seafood and tourism industries \$82 million a year. The main culprit for this state of affairs is fertiliser. Intensive corn and soybean production requires large amounts of fertiliser and manure applied to the soil every year. The excess nitrate is washed into rivers and streams and up in the Gulf of Mexico. In May 2015, some 104,000 metric tonnes of nitrate and 19,300 metric tonnes of phosphorus flowed down the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers into the Gulf of Mexico. It is like a flotilla of more than 4,000 shipping containers headed downriver in just one month, fully loaded with pollution. The more meat people consume, the more corn is needed to feed the animals, which in turn mean more fertiliser use, and the faster dead zones spread. Fertilisers also produce a

waste product called gypsum, a chalky white substance often used to make building plaster. It is also dumped into the rivers. Worldwide, humans create more than 160 million metric tonnes of nitrogen every year, far more than the environment has had to cope with through the ages.

## Chickenisation of the world

Known as white meat, chicken meat has been marketed as a healthier alternative to red meat. However, industrially produced chickens have nearly three times higher fat content and a third less protein than the chicken of the 1970s. Super-fast growing breeds of chicken are strongly associated with food-poisoning bug campylobacter, which can cause severe diarrhoea, weight loss and even death. Poultry meat and eggs are also a major source of another food-poisoning bug, salmonella. To counter these bugs farmers pump the birds with antibiotics. Indeed, half of all antibiotics produced in the world are fed to chickens, cows, pigs and other farmed animals. Human beings are becoming immune to antibiotics as they ingest them from the meat they eat. There are fears that once treatable diseases will once again kill. For the egg industry, male chicks are of no use and they are gassed or dropped live into mincing machines. Battery or free range, it's just another dark side of the industry. Unilever, the food manufacturing giant, is trying to find ways of eliminating the cull of male chicks in the industry - probably through sex determination of the chicks before they hatch. Of the billion laying hens in the world - one for each person - nearly two-thirds are kept in battery cages. These are bare wire boxes so small the hens can't spread their wings. Here they stay for life - usually little more than a year, maybe two - before they are slaughtered and their worn-out bodies sent for soups, pies or pet food.

## Pesticides kill birds and bees

People assume that pesticides are sprayed on crops but in reality they are designed to be absorbed by the plant, making the whole plant and not just its surface toxic to wildlife. Pesticides are used to coat seeds before planting. However, the plant does not absorb most of the active ingredients of the pesticides. They instead enter the soil and contaminate the land. Fruit and vegetables as well as bread and flour are contaminated with pesticides. Pesticides kill tens of thousands of birds. When birds disappear it is a sign of ecological and environmental damage to an area. Apart from birds, bees, butterflies, ladybirds and earthworms are also killed by pesticides. Brazil, which accounts for 20% of global pesticide consumption, has people dying of pesticide poisoning. In California, the Central Valley's vast almond orchards are now pollinated by some 40 billion bees drafted in from other states. There are no wild bees left in California. Industrially reared bees are kept in huge enclosures the size of football pitches similar to factory farms. Without wild bee pollination, there is no food. This poses a big challenge for our survival.

## Intensive rearing of animals for meat consumption

The origin of all the problems is intensively reared animals and the huge amount of cereals needed to feed them. The European Union imports 35 million tonnes of soya every year from Brazil to feed Europe's industrially reared animals. Almost 70% of greenhouse gas emissions released annually from tropical forests come from just two parts of the world where the forest has been turned over to agriculture: Sumatra and the edges of the Brazilian Amazon on the state of Mato Grosso. Brazil is only second to US

when it comes to producing beef. It has 200 million cattle, most of them reared on grass. However cattle are crammed in small areas day in day out with hot sun beating down on them. According to Carolina Galvani, a Brazilian animal welfare advocate working for Humane Society International, the cattle are subjected to hot-branding, dehorning, castration and long distance transport.

## No more fish in the sea

After the Second World War, South Africa developed the first fishery on the continent dedicated to catching small pelagic fish and turning them into fishmeal. By the millennium the fishery was sucking 400,000 tonnes of anchovies, pilchards and red eyes out of the ocean every year. Most of it was turned into fishmeal to feed farmed poultry. The ecosystem relies on the small pelagic fish for food: anchovies, sardines and red-eyes. These species drive the rest of the ocean community - the small fish eating the small pelagic which in turn are eaten by bigger fish, sharks, tuna, penguins, seals, dolphins and whales all depend on the little fish. The penguins are severely impacted by decimation of pelagic fish. A sizeable portion of South Africa's catch of pelagic fish is exported to feed intensively farmed animals in other countries. Worldwide, over 17 million tonnes of small pelagic fish are removed from the ocean every year - an estimated 90 billion individual animals. Peru is the single biggest player in this game, producing a third of world's total fishmeal export. Much of it goes to feed industrially reared animals in Europe and China. The UK alone imports up to 100,000 tonnes of fishmeal a year, about a third from Peru. Peru is losing more than it gains by exporting fishmeal, both in terms of the damage to its marine ecosystem and in terms of food value. The same is true of Ecuador, which produced 100,000 tonnes of fishmeal in

2011. The same harvesting of small fish called sandeels is going on in the North Sea. They are fed to farmed animals and farmed salmon. With the loss of their primary food source, all marine life and seabirds are facing extinction. In the blink of an evolutionary eye, fishermen the world over are coming to terms with the fact that the inexhaustible seas are anything but.

## Charles Darwin

Chris Darwin is the great, great grandson of Charles Darwin, author of *On The Origin of Species*. Based in New South Wales, Australia he has come to the conclusion that the world's insatiable appetite for meat consumption is the cause of the decline of many species. Meat, milk and eggs put out far more greenhouse gas emissions than plant products such as grains, vegetables and pulses. At present 70 billion animals are reared for food every year. Estimates suggest that in 2050 there will be 500 million more cattle, 200 million more pigs, a billion more sheep and goats and 18 billion extra poultry on Earth than there were on 2005. An extra cereal cropland the size of Italy and France will be needed by 2050 to feed the animals. Factory farming of animals incarcerates almost 50 billion animals in darkened sheds or feedlots, crammed and confined, while millions of acres of chemical soaked cropland are dedicated to growing their feed. Human beings are facing a catastrophe of their own making. Drastic changes are likely this century to water cycles, ecosystems, and forests, which could mean whole forests disappearing and the Amazon turning into savannah or even a desert. The world could be hit by more severe storms, droughts, floods and crop failures. Low-lying cities and regions could disappear underwater. Bangladesh faces the threat of disappearance. Millions of people will be displaced by climate change, giving rise

to violent conflicts. Cereals are not natural food for cattle. Grass is the natural food for cattle. Grazing animals put fertility back in the soil. Cow manure helps build soil fertility.

## Sumatra

The Indonesian island of Sumatra is one of the most biologically and culturally rich landscapes in the world. Its rainforests contain a tenth of the world's known plants, 12% of its mammals and 17% of its birds. The province of Aceh in Northern Sumatra has a vast area of tropical rainforest known as the 'Leuser ecosystem'. It covers 2.6 million hectares. It has two huge mountain ranges, two volcanoes and nine major river systems. It is the last place on Earth where it is possible to see Sumatran elephants, tigers, rhinoceros and orang-utans. Sadly Indonesia has one of the highest rates of deforestation on the world - less than half of country's original forests remain. This is bad news for Sumatra's wildlife. Deforestation has caused entire populations of elephants to disappear. Only around 2,500 Sumatran elephants remain. And the cause of deforestation is palm plantation. The global palm trade is some \$42 billion a year. Palm oil can be found in about half of all packaged products sold in supermarkets. There is another more devastating ingredient of the palm fruit. It has an edible seed or kernel. They are turned into palm-kernel meal and exported as animal feed all over the world. In 2013 palm kernel was a \$3.4 billion industry, with every 7 tonnes of palm oil producing one tonne of kernel. Apart from that, according to the UK government figures some 150,000 tonnes of crude palm oil and its derivative (known as palm fatty acid distillate) was also used for animal feed in 2009. Few shoppers realise that the milk, beef and bacon they buy may be coming from palm-fed animals. Deforestation means no future for elephants, orang-utans and other

wildlife. It means droughts and floods. Up against big companies the local inhabitants are powerless to protect their forests. Europe's appetite for cheap meat from industrial farms is already known to gobble more than half of its cereals and 30 million tonnes of imported soya and vast quantities of fish. As if that was not enough, palm-kernel is used to meet the insatiable appetite for animal feed.

## California and Water Scarcity

The state of California in the US has been facing acute droughts. Meat and dairy products from industrial farms have especially large water footprints due to the water-intensive feed required to raise the animals. More than 90% of California's water use is associated with agricultural products. The amount of water required in producing a kilo of beef would keep a person in daily baths for three months. A kilo of chicken would take twenty-four bathtubs of water. As a response to the shortage of water people have dug water wells but they too are running dry. The picture is mirrored in many parts of the world where water is in dwindling supply. Already more than a billion people live in conditions of extreme water shortage. By the middle of this century, between 4 and 7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce. As the livestock population explodes, so does its water use. 70% of world's precious fresh water resource is used up in agriculture.

## Soil

Soil is the foundation of life on Earth. Without soil we cannot grow food. Charles Darwin discovered that the humble earthworm is one of the enduring signs of healthy soil. It has been estimated that earthworms completely turn over the equivalent of all soil on the planet to a depth of one inch (2.5 cm) every year. They mix soil with nutrients, stirring up



essential ingredients for growing the food on which we depend. Intensive agriculture and indiscriminate use of pesticides is responsible for the demise of earthworm. Since 1850 Britain has lost 84% of its fertile topsoil, with erosion continuing at a rate of 1-3 cm a year. Given that soil can take hundreds of years to form, these losses are not sustainable. There could be only 100 harvests left in UK soils. There is an ancient Sanskrit quote from 1500 BC, which reads:

'Upon this handful of soil our survival depends. Husband it and it will grow our food, our fuel, and our shelter and surround us with beauty. Abuse it and the soil will collapse and die, taking humanity with it. We forget this at our peril'.

## American Bison or Buffalo

According to historical estimates around 30-50 million bison once roamed America's Great Plains together with countless elk, deer and other grazing animals. They were sustained by nothing more than sunlight, rain and grass, returning the nutrients they took from the prairies back to the soil through their droppings. They seemed to have lived harmoniously with humans for millennia; Native Americans never threatened their numbers. In the late nineteenth century, however, they were slaughtered to extinction. Caught in the crossfire between Native Americans and European settlers, they were hunted down with large calibre guns. They were quickly replaced by cattle. At first the cattle grazed freely, but over time they were shunted to feedlots, as the cowboys and wide-open ranches gave way to the plough. Vast areas of the prairie were ploughed up by early ranchers and farmers. They paid a heavy price for this desecration. By the 1930s, light soils, low rainfall and high winds had made for a destructive combination. When drought struck, the soil lacked the stronger root system of grass as an anchor. The winds

picked up loose topsoil and swirled it into dense clouds, called 'black blizzards'. Dust storms wreaked havoc in America, choking cattle and pastures and driving many off the land. To help struggling farmers in the Great Depression the government passed a law to buy surplus grain for a rainy day. Bolstered by government support the farmers produced record corn and found a new market to feed cattle raised for beef. After the Second World War, Britain and other European countries followed a similar policy. The bison were wiped out, giving way to cattle and then corn. For millennia, a wonderful, continent-wide array of flora and fauna was sustained by nothing more than the perennial harvest of the plains: grass. Then it was carpeted with chemical-soaked corn, destined not to feed people but cattle. Is that really progress?

## Anthropocene

This is described as the age from when human beings began to damage the planet. From the beginning of industrial revolution in 1800 and the dawn of the atomic age, human beings have severely impacted the planet. Human activity has caused mass extinctions of plant and animal species, polluted the oceans and altered the atmosphere.

Global warming threatens to cause chaos. Business as usual is not an option. Multibillion dollar industries prosper from intensively reared animals at the cost of irreversible damage to the planet. Sadly, influential bodies like United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation call for a doubling of food production by 2050. This they say is to avoid mass hunger. More livestock and more crop production is advocated. Society could choose to keep animals ever more cruelly or it could choose a better way, based on common sense and long held wisdom, adapted for a modern world.

## Birmingham Jain Ashram celebrates its 40th anniversary



Jains from London, Leicester, Manchester and many other cities took part in the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Birmingham Jain Ashram. A Mahaveer Award was presented to the Birmingham Animal Action group for their splendid work of compassion to animals. Most of those attending also took the following pledge: 'I pledge to remain a vegetarian for the rest of my life. As a vegetarian I will refrain from eating meat, fish and eggs. I will also try to give up dairy and go vegan'.

*Celebrating 40th Anniversary of the Jain Ashram Birmingham on Saturday 24th June 2017. Dean Bracher representing Birmingham Animal Action receiving the Mahaveer Award presented by Arvinder Jain, President of Jain Ashram Birmingham. Looking on is Dr. Aman Puri Consul General for India, Birmingham.*

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## **Shakespeare wrote the following words more than 400 years ago in his play Henry VI. Nothing has changed. Cows and their calves are separated and killed even today:**

And as the butcher takes away the calf  
And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays,  
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,  
Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;  
And as the dam runs lowing up and down,  
Looking the way her harmless young one went,  
And can do nought but wail her darling's loss,

*Quotation from Henry VI Part 2 Act III Scene 1*

## Number of animals slaughtered for meat in the UK in 2014:

**Bovine (mainly cows): 2,670,000**

**Pigs: 10,465,000**

**Sheep: 14,655,000**

**Goats: 19,000**

**Poultry: 971, 276,000**

**Total: 999,085,000, Almost a billion for a population of about 60 million**

## In 2015, 2.08 million experiments were carried out on animals in the UK. The breakdown is as follows:

**Mice: 1, 26 million**

**Fish: 294,000**

**Rats: 258,000**

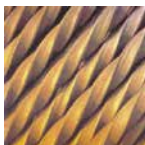
**Birds: 141,000**

**Others like guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, pigs, goats, sheep and cattle: 107,000**

**Protected species, horses: 4,600**

**Primates and cats: 3,600**

*Information courtesy: From the article titled, 'Double standards in ethical ethics: why is a lab mouse better protected than a cow'? It has been written by Dr. Kate Chatfield, Deputy Director Centre for professional ethics, University of Central Lancashire.*



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## Dr Alan Long veteran activist passes away aged 92 on 6th June 2017



The Vegetarian Society had its headquarters in West Kensington, London in the seventies. The society at the time was quite active with some very distinguished people at the helm. Dr and Mrs Latto, Neville Hall, John Le Grice, Maxwell Lee, Kathy Silk and Cynthia Hall all were actively putting across the vegetarian message along with Dr Alan Long. Many of these individuals had experienced the horrors of the Second World War and were determined to create a society which would extend the hand of compassion to the animal kingdom with whom we share this planet. With his scientific background, Dr Alan Long established a case for a plant-based diet with his painstakingly researched papers. A thorough gentleman and a quintessential Englishman, Alan was deeply concerned about the wanton cruelty in the production of meat and milk. Visiting cattle markets and slaughterhouses Alan documented and exposed the sheer violence inflicted on animals. Alan demolished long established myths of the benefits of eating meat with scientific data. Challenging the

medical establishment and the government and their orthodoxy about the benefits of meat consumption was not easy. Alan laid the groundwork for what has been a complete turnaround from the medical world and the government. Eat less meat; eat ten portions of fruit and veg a day is their mantra now! Alan was also way ahead of his time in saying that going vegan is the only way of assuring that the immense cruelty involved in the dairy industry can be stopped. Again his stand is vindicated as millions of people are opting to go vegan and veganism is the fastest growing lifestyle at present time. Alan had other ideas. He wanted agricultural land to be put to better use with food grown organically. For many, the Vegetarian Society was like a club of like-minded people who had holidays and world vegetarian congresses abroad together. Not for Alan. He was steadfastly focused on ending the cruelty to animals in the meat and dairy industry. The passing away of Alan signals an end of an era in which dedicated, compassionate people worked to create a better world. I was privileged to have the association of Alan over many years. We had a special interest in the welfare of the Burwash Animal Sanctuary run by Sheila and Ray Barber.

### Letters

*The Guardian 13 August 2016*

George Monbiot does not mention the other existential threat facing our species. The huge amount of antibiotics fed to animals means consumers of meat are becoming immune to them. This is a nightmare scenario and diseases that were brought under control over the last 100 years are reappearing. People are already dying as antibiotics are no longer working.

*Nitin Mehta*

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While we have good health we rarely think about what would happen if we lost our **mental capacity** or **indeed became very ill**. This is becoming more and more common as our lives become complex and longer. Would it not be great if at the time of your greatest need, you have loved ones taking decisions on your behalf safely and legally? You can do just that by taking out **Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA)** to **cover Health and/or Finance**. They are both different LPAs but equally important. A vital document for the times we now live in. LPAs can only be set up while you have adequate mental capacity.

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**'It's a Dead Cert, So Plan for It' ... Leave a Lasting Legacy NOT a Mess**



## Fasting as part of Ahimsa

I am an average 25-year-old trying to live a spiritually fulfilling life by follow the footsteps laid out by Shrimad Rajchandra, the spiritual mentor of Mahatma Gandhi. My Guru, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai is my guide, teacher and inspiration. Born into a Jain family, I follow a careful vegetarian diet. I do not eat meat, fish, eggs or root vegetables. Living in the UK, it is not always easy to follow such a rigorous diet, but where there is a will, there is always a way and I have managed to stick to my ideals. Not so long ago, during the Jain festival of Parushyan, I decide to fast. Usually fasting in Jainism entails non-consumption of any food or liquids. One only consumes water from sunrise to sunset. This festival is celebrated for 8 days. I have previously done 8 consecutive days of fasts, but this time I wanted to go on for longer. I told a friend of mine who was fasting with me at the same time that we should both continue and do Maskhaman (fasting for 30 days). However, she jokingly laughed it off. At the time, even I was unaware of the potential and self-control that was within me. I continued fasting for 30 days thereby completing a Maskhaman. During this time for 23 days I continued working. I work for British Airways, which involves flying to different European destinations on a daily basis. I managed to carry out my tasks with the same energy and strength as when I was eating.

### **Reasons for me continuing and carrying on to complete my Maskhaman include:**

1. Something to offer back to my beloved Guru as he has given me so much.
2. I have always wanted to do it, to test my self-control and willpower
3. To show compassion for all living things including the life in food that we consume even if it is a vegetarian diet. Even plants feel pain and by abstaining from any food for a given period of time, that harm is avoided.

The changes I noticed in myself varied from the beginning to the end but to sum it up I can only

use the word: I felt 'connected.' Connected to what, you may ask. It is about being connected to something beyond just the physical materialistic world. Connected to a Divine presence perhaps externally but more likely within me: The Soul. I felt connected to the grace that flows within us all.

The teachings of my Guru gave me strength. During times of weakness I often repeated the line, "I am a soul performing a role and I must do that perfectly". This kept me going and also made me aware of the strength within myself. Not eating for extended periods of time will obviously have an impact on your body but I did not feel any of it. Why? I do not know. Over the course of the fasting period, I received various opinions about my decision. Some said I should continue on right till the end with the spirit of a lion while others attempted to deter me due to concerns for my health. Somehow, I managed to persevere with one strong reason in my mind - ahimsa towards all life form. I travelled to India to celebrate my Guru's 50th birthday and also to break my fast in his presence. I had to be careful in what I had to eat afterwards so that the body could adjust to food again. I had sugar with water for energy. I continued this for approximately a week and slowly began to add different solid foods into my diet. I continued avoiding foods which are difficult to digest such as bread, cheese and milk. Fast forward 8 months and I am healthy and cleared my medical examinations without any problem whatsoever. On a final note I would like to add that Ahimsa is not only non-violence, it is love and compassion for all life forms, big and small. It is about being a voice for the voiceless.



Guruj Rakeshbhai breaking Varun's Fast

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## Veganism should be the way of life



I wrote this on my Facebook page on my 21st birthday in which I reflected on my life thus far and the regrets that I have as a 21-year-old man.

I am ashamed of the 21 years of my life in which along the way I have contributed to unimaginable animal suffering and torture at some point through eating dairy and eggs, buying wool and leather. Going to zoos and other entertainment venues which imprison animals, buying products without a second thought as to whether an animal had to go through a lifetime of suffering in a testing lab for it to be made. I am ashamed of the times that I didn't speak up for animals because I was too much of a coward or worried about what others may think. Ashamed of the times when I didn't have the guts to speak up for what's right. Ashamed of the times that I sat in a restaurant with cheese/yoghurt/butter on my plate without knowing about the mothers

who had their babies stolen from them so that I could eat food made from the milk that they had produced for their young. The biggest regret of my life is that I did not make the change sooner and that it took me 20.5 years to realise my wrongdoings. I now realise that veganism is not only related to your diet but it is a lifestyle. It's not eating meat, fish, dairy, eggs, not buying leather, wool, suede and not paying to watch animals being used for entertainment. I can't do anything about the 21 years that have passed but I can speak up and fight for the animals that are suffering now and that will suffer in the years to come. I am not religious and so have no one to ask forgiveness from. I hope to be able to forgive myself one day when I know that I have truly done all that I can for those that I and the majority of us have wronged in the most horrific way, albeit unknowingly, the animals. The only birthday wish I will ever have is to be able to persuade others to give up a lifestyle which hurts animals. Animals are being subjected to the most heinous and despicable crimes from being castrated without anaesthesia to having their young ones stolen from them to being gassed to death. We have to help them. I hope this inspires you to fight even harder for animals and to promote veganism as best as you can.

*Rishi J Patel*

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### **Indian government advises pregnant women to not eat meat and eggs!**

Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy is part of the Indian government's ministry that promotes traditional and alternative medicine. It has recommended the above!

### **Contraceptive Pills: a billion dollar industry.**

The Pill is by far the most popular contraceptive pharmaceutical worldwide, taken by more than 200 million women worldwide. It is currently prescribed to 3.5 million British women, a quarter of all 16 to 49 year olds. However, studies have shown that women who use the Pill for more than a year have a 2.5 times risk of 'triple- negative' breast cancer, which has a higher mortality rate. There are many other side-effects.



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