

Vegetarianism

For Our Bodies, Our Minds,
Our Souls and Our Planet

By
His Holiness
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Blessings from the Author

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, of environmental destruction, of global warming, of irreversible pollution and of the untold suffering of billions of our brothers and sisters around the world.

In 1996, 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 -- in general -- humans will make choices for the betterment of not only themselves but of 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.virtualcentre.org/en/library/key_pub/longshad/A0701E00.htm or
email to ihrf@ihrf.com and we'd be happy to email you a copy*

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FOREWORD

At the age of 15, 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 3 different forks, 4 different spoons and 2 knives – each course would require its own cutlery.

From the kitchen came the piping hot meal, and my friend’s mother placed a fresh roasted quail gingerly on each plate. The quail had been tenderly tied in thin string which bound its small body tightly, and 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 bandaid 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 24 hours a day, and eventually skinned alive? Could we even imagine it? Of course not. Yet, we do. Every time we eat a hamburger. 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 food. 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 weakness 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 are, I believed, vegetarian by nature. Yet, Newsweek magazine recently published a study that the number of chicken eaters in India has doubled since the year 2000!! In a mere 7 years, the numbers of those who are no longer vegetarian in India has doubled! For that reason, we have now realized the compelling need to disseminate this information amongst the Indian community.

In this booklet you will find innumerable compelling reasons to become a 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. Through 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.

Through 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 Bhagwati

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, what we eat... Perhaps we simply continue to live in the way we were raised; perhaps we automatically adopt 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 meanings behind the choices we make – for ourselves, for our children and for our planet — each time we put food in our bodies.

I hear so many of my Indian youth tell me, “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. In fact, although the importance of being vegetarianism is

even more true than it was thousands of years ago, the reasons “why” have changed significantly over the last century. Some of the meanings and reasons are the same today as when our scriptures were written thousands of years ago. However, 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 more than that.

Today, it is an imperative choice for anyone who is concerned 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 want to 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 lady who -- while she lived in their monastery -- xeroxed photocopies of this booklet for all of them.

So many people have written to tell me that either they personally have become vegetarian or that they have converted others to vegetarianism through the message in this booklet. That means: 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. It will be a great gift to your loved ones and also 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. Un able 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 *ahimsaa*, 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 ways and less expensive ways. Hence, to continue to kill the animals is simply to fulfill our desires, our pleasures. It is simply selfish gratification at the incredible pain of another.

Even 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 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. 14,000 of them are killed EVERY MINUTE in USA for our consumption. The life of a chicken is terrible violence. They are put into large warehouses where they are crammed together frequently 30,000 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, such that frequently they cannot even move. The Department of Agriculture recommends that chickens should have a minimum of 2 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 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 down to your shoulders in order to stand. There is no way to straighten your neck. And you are all barefoot on

*“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

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, it is your 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 the 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 6 weeks of age that they can’t even walk, and 90% of them have a disease called leucosis, otherwise known as chicken cancer.

Why do they develop cancer and other diseases at such an exorbitant rate? Well, one reason might 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

The turkeys we eat are an incredible 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 inordi-

*“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*

nate 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 most throughout the rest of the world are conceived through artificial insemination. We have managed even to disrupt one of the most basic laws of nature – that 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, hotdogs 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 mam-

mals 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, teaching him to fend for himself. A typical calf will nurse at his mother's breast for 8 months after birth. However, in the meat industry, these baby cows are wrested from their mothers less than 24 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. And muscle is hard; fat is soft and juicy. Fat is tender. The difficulty is that if one uses one's limbs at all, one develops muscle. So, the only way to prevent muscle is to prevent use of the 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 their mother's breast, are chained into restraining stalls. Ninety percent of baby calves are taken from their mothers less than 24 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

*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*

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. Let us examine it. 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 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 USA showed

*For every 3 hamburgers you eat, you can assume that at least 1 cow
was alive and conscious while he went through the assembly line of
torture to become your lunch.*

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 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 3 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 100 cows who are skinned and dismembered, this company considers it acceptable if 5 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 USA that means somewhere between 4500 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 the Pigs Treated?

Hot Dogs, Pork Chops and Bacon:

What about hot dogs and bacon? Does the pork industry do any better? Hardly. 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, 10 billion animals (not including fish) are killed in USA alone for our food consumption. If you add the rest of the world, it is significantly more than that. Over 10 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

Each year 10 billion animals (not including fish) are killed mercilessly for our food consumption. This is more than the total number of people on the planet.

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, our pleasures. There is no need or utility in it. It is simply selfish gratification at the incredible pain of another.

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 would very much like to believe that we are righteous, honest people and that we are passing these values onto our children. Well, if we eat meat, we can not say that we do not tell lies. In fact, our life is a lie. Here is why: 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. Or we would have to go to one of those chicken “farms,” 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 can not 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. And we eat it packaged in neat, nice 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 of bread? We wouldn’t. And that is why it is a lie. We can not even admit to ourselves what we are doing. How then, can we consider ourselves honest people if we

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

are lying every time we eat? And 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 from it, 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. And they prepare us to either fight or run away. Thus, they are sometimes called the “fight or flight” hormones and are referred to as adrenaline.

When an animal is about to be killed, its body is flooded with these stress hormones which remain in the animals’ tissues. So, when we eat

*To become vegetarian is to step into the stream which leads to Nirvana.
The Buddha*

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 so many people come to me and they complain, “Pujya 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, angry. Slowly, over time, these hormones change the very nature of our beings and we become tense, stressed, uncontrollably angry.

Perhaps, if we treat this temple that is our bodies 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?

So, 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:

Vegetarianism and Ecology

As a vegetarian you will help to solve problems of:

- **World Hunger**
- **Global Warming**
- **Deforestation & Environmental destruction**
- **Poverty**
- **Wastage of water**

*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 16 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 1 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 16 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 2 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 US livestock.

We could feed 10 billion people a year if everyone were vegetarian. Not one person on Earth would have to go to sleep hungry at night.

- One acre of fertile land can grow 40,000 pounds of potatoes. 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 fulfill the nutritional requirements of 22 people. If you use it to grow rice, you can fulfill the nutritional requirements of 19 people. But, if you use it to produce chicken (including the food for the chicken and raising the chickens), you can only fulfill the nutritional requirements of 2 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 fulfill the nutritional requirements of 1 person. With so many people starving in the world, how can we take our land and use it so irresponsibly?
 - Today, one billion people don't have enough to eat, but a famous fast food chain opens 5 new restaurants every day!
 - 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 10 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

Every day 40,000 children starve to death, while the US produces enough to give every person on Earth 2 loaves of bread a day...but this grain is being fed to livestock, not people

beef is enormous. It is estimated that for every hamburger made from rainforest beef, 55 square feet of rainforest land is destroyed.

- Additionally for this one hamburger, 75 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 3 kilograms!
- 25% of the methane produced in the world, which is the other leading gas causing global warming, is produced by livestock.
- 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 13 years if everyone ate a meat-based diet, but 260 years if everyone ate a vegetarian diet.

Why is meat eating hurting the poor people?

- A pound of protein from meat costs \$15.40, but a pound of protein from wheat costs \$1.50.
- So, meat costs 10 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 wasting water?

For each hamburger made from rainforest beef, 75 kg. of Carbon dioxide are released into the air. This is the equivalent of driving your car all day long, for 25 days!

- The production of 1 pound of beef takes 2500 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 1 pound of wheat or potatoes takes 25 gallons of water
- So, we would waste 100 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 33 times as much water as if you ate a vegetarian diet!
- Let's analyze water usage. In an average shower of 7 minutes, every day, you would use approximately 2600 gallons of water in 6 months. That means that the same amount of water is used in the production of 1 pound of beef as in showering every day for 6 months!
- Newsweek magazine is quoted as saying, "The amount of water that goes into a 1000 pound steer [male cow who will 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!!

The amount of water used in bathing daily for 6 months is the same amount of water that is needed to produce 1 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

Section III:

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 2 to 20 times higher rates of death from heart disease and cancer than vegetarians. 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). The report by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research states, “Vegetarian diets decrease the risk of cancer.”

A recent 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 6-10 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 ovo-lacto-vegetarians (those who don't eat meat but do eat eggs and dairy) are on average 14% lower than non-vegetar-

Vegetarians have the lowest rates of heart disease ... In UK vegetarians outlive the rest of the population by an average of 6-10 years.

ians and 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 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 which have shown similar results of reversal of heart disease by using ONLY the strict vegetarian, low fat diet. "In this study, patients become virtually heart attack proof," the researchers showed.

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. They develop resistance/immunity to antibiotics, whether we take the antibiotics themselves or simply

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

eat the meat of an animal who has taken them. So, then when we, ourselves, are sick and actually need the antibiotics, they do not work. This is because the bacteria in our bodies have already developed resistances and mutations to them, through so many years of ingesting these antibiotics through meat.

Each year more and more antibiotics become futile and powerless; each year there are more and more resistant strains of bacterial infections. Many people believe that the reason for this is that as we consume low doses for so many years through our consumption of meat, the bacteria all have a chance to mutate and become resistant. 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 and other, newer antibiotics as well.

Hormones

Another issue has to do with hormones. The animals are fed large doses of hormones to make 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

Between 90-100% of US beef cows receive hormones

within our own bodies leads to disease. For example, over secretion of adrenaline and the stress hormones can lead to heart disease. Over secretion of estrogen has been associated with cancer in women. Yet, when we eat the meat, we are ingesting the tissues of animals who have been fed frequently 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.

There are many other health issues which are rarely mentioned yet very important to consider when making dietary choices:

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 "gutted" the cow carcasses are put all together into cold water, in this way 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, "In-

dividual chickens are gutted [have the 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 a 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 the 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, 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 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. Estimates range from 20% to 80% of chickens that are infected with the bacteria. A famous National news channel found that over 50% of the chicken they purchased in the supermarket was infected. Salmonella is also a major problem in eggs, and more than 650,000 people in USA alone are sickened from eating salmonella infected eggs each year!

Another major pathogen found in meat, chicken, eggs and dairy products is listeria which causes hospitalization in 92% of those infected and causes 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

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

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 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, markedly less than that suggested by the meat and dairy industry sponsored “research.” For example, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition recommends 2 ½ % daily intake of protein; The World Health Organization recommends 4.5%. 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 decades 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 vegetable, legumes and grains, we will easily get enough protein. These items do not have to be eaten always at the same meal. (See Position of The American Dietetic Association: Vegetarian Diets, JADA, November, 1997, and "A Vegetarian Sourcebook" by Keith Akers, Vegetarian Press, 1993.)

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 are all good sources of iron. To increase the amount of iron absorbed at a meal eat a food containing vitamin C, such as citrus fruit or juices, tomato, or broccoli. Cooking food in iron cookware also adds to iron intake.

But 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.

But 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 IV:

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.

The issue with fish is several-fold – personal health issues, environmental issues as well as issues 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 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 the 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 or 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. 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. Further, the flesh fre-

quently 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? 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, wreak-

ing 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 5 pounds of commercially, wild fish to create 1 pound of farmed fish, due to the fact that it has to be continually fed to the salmons in the farms in order for them to grow nice and fat.

All the commercially netted fish comes with heavy doses of toxins, which then concentrate in the flesh of farmed fish, making it probably the most toxic thing that 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 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 as been shown to cause retinal damage.

Do fish feel pain?

While it may seem obvious that fish are able to feel pain, like every

“Scientists estimate that fish endure up to 15 minutes of excruciating pain before they lose consciousness.”
(<http://www.fishinghurts.com/CommercialFishing3.asp>)

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 that “The scientific literature is quite clear. Anatomically, physiologically and biologically, the pain system in fish is virtually the same as in birds and animals.” (<http://fishinghurts.com/FishFeelPain.asp>)

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]." 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. 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 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 15 minutes of excruciating pain before they lose consciousness.” (<http://www.fishinghurts.com/CommercialFishing3.asp>)

"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

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. More than 90% percent of large fish populations have been completely exterminated in the past 50 years. 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 — dolphins, whales, and porpoises — die EVERY DAY due to 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 15 pieces of shrimp which make it to our plate in the restaurant, a full 85 other types 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 20 million tons of nontargeted 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—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 75 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.”

However, 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.

A recent 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 of RAW, untreated sewage of 500,000 people being dumped daily into the coastal waters, then you can imagine the effect of the 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, the 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? I have heard so many people tell me 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, considering ourselves vegetarians.

Egg - Laying Hens

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 7-8 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, panicked. So they peck each other which causes 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. So they starve to death.

In addition to their beaks, hens frequently have their toes and claws cut off (naturally 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 14 days and no water for 3 days. During this time they lose up to 1/3 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). These egg-production factories produce eggs which are frequently called "concentration camp eggs."

Murder of Roosters-to-be

Naturally, in these hen farms, not all of the eggs can be sold off to supermarkets and other companies, because the farm must ensure that enough new baby hens are hatched and born so that the production rate continues. Therefore, depending on the size of the farm,

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!

large numbers of these eggs are actually allowed to hatch so that new hens can be born. However, at least 50% of the chicks will be boys and there is little use for roosters in the egg business since they cannot grow up to lay eggs. These boys cannot be sold to chicken farms to become broiler chickens due to the fact that the breeds of chickens used on egg farms and broiler chicken farms are distinctly different. 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.

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 6 or 7 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.

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 1 of its gestation period one can make out a skull and backbone. As the days of gestation process in the exhibit,

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

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 V:

What About Leather?

Isn't it just an unintentional by-product?

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 cows themselves as well as for the enormous contribution it makes to water pollution.

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.

Tragically, 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 the 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 the 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.” (<http://www.petaindia.com/cleath.html>)

Those who make it to the slaughterhouses still living, are likely to have their legs snapped off, their skin removed and their throats slit while they are still fully conscious. No anesthesia is used.

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

Environmental Issues:

Aside from the violence to the animals themselves, tanneries (factories which produce the final “product” of leather) are one of the greatest environmental polluters. 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 death-cocktail 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 is 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 disease are found at significantly higher rates among the people who drink the water and eat the food grown in these fields.

Let Us Stop the Cruelty

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

Section IV:

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, 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 harmless gossip.” Yet, these are the things which actually determine our entire mental state.

How often do we hear children repeating words, phrases, 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 nonchalantly dump poison – through every organ – into our bodies?

There is a famous picture of Mahatma Gandhi which used to be hung up all over India. It was Gandhiji sitting with 3 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 VI:

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.

Statistics and details of Factory Farming conditions and other detailed information taken with much love and gratitude from Diet for a New America and the Food Revolution, by John Robbins. Information and descriptions also taken from Harvest for Hope by Jane Goodall.

FAMOUS ACTORS, ACTRESSES AND MUSICIANS WHO ARE VEGETARIAN

ACTORS/ACTRESSES

Debbie Arnold
 Rosanna Arquette
 Alex Baldwin
 Brigitte Bardot
 Drew Barrymore
 Kim Basinger
 Meredith Baxter
 Maureen Beattie
 Dirk Benedict (A Team)
 Candice Bergen ("Murphy Brown")
 Sandra Berkin
 Traci Bingham (Baywatch)
 Christopher Blake
 Gillian & Gayle Blakeney (Neighbours)
 Lisa Bonet (The Cosby Show)
 Cathryn Bradshaw
 Nicola Bryant
 Kirk Cameron
 Claudia Christian ("Babylon 5")
 Rachael Leigh Cook (Babysitters Club)
 Bo Corre (Eldorado)
 James Cromwell ("Babe")
 Sara Crowe
 Peter Cushing
 Ted Danson (Cheers)
 Amanda Dickinson
 Madhuri Dixit
 David Duchovny (The X-Files)
 Mike Farrell (M*A*S*H)
 Jerome Flynn (Soldier, Soldier)
 Michael J. Fox
 Jennie Garth (Beverly Hills, 90210)
 Richard Gere
 Sara Gilbert
 Sheila Gish
 Louise Milwood Haigh (The Lodge)
 Daryl Hannah
 Woody Harrelson
 Nigel Hawthorne
 Dustin Hoffman
 Rachel Lindsay (Brookside)
 Cal Macaninch (The Advocates)
 Virginia Madsen
 Charlotte Martin (The Archers)
 Paul McGann (8th Doctor of Doctor Who)
 Glenda McKay (Emmerdale)
 Rue McLanahan (Golden Girls)
 Amanda Mealing
 Spike Milligan
 Jessica Muschamp (Neighbours)
 Simon O'Brien
 Hazel O'Connor
 Shaunna O'Grady (Neighbours)
 Alexandra Paul (Baywatch)
 Anthony Perkins
 Polly Perkins (Trish in Eldorado)
 Rhea Perlman
 Cassandra Peterson (Elvira: Mistress of the Dark)
 River Phoenix
 Brad Pitt (Interview With a Vampier, Legends of the Fall)
 Tracey Pollen (Family Ties)
 Natalie Portman (The Professional)
 Joe Regalbuto (Murphy Brown)
 Eric Richard (The Bill, UK TV)
 Abigail Rokison (Darling Buds Of May)
 Martin Shaw
 Brooke Shields
 Alicia Silverstone
 Marina Sirtis (Star Trek)

Eric Stolz
 Mary Tyler Moore
 Jonathan Taylor Thomas (Home Improvement)
 Matthew Vaughan (Emmerdale)
 Kristina Wagner (General Hospital)
 Lindsay Wagner
 Dennis Weaver
 Spice Williams
 Phoebe Buffet (Friends)
 David Duchovny (X-Files)
 Don McLean (singer, songwriter)
 Jerry Seinfeld (Seinfeld)
 Lisa Simpson ("The Simpsons")
 Jonathan Taylor Thomas (Home Improvement)
 Bob Dylan
 Melissa Etheridge
 Peter Gabriel
 Boy George
 Martin Gore (Depeche Mode)
 George Harrison (Beatles/solo)
 Steve Howe (Yes, GTR, solo)
 Chrissie Hynde
 Billy Idol
 Indigo Girls
 Joe Jackson
 LaToya Jackson
 Eric Johnson
 Howard Jones
 Martin & Gary Kemp (Spandau Ballet)
 Jim Kerr (Simple Minds)
 Gladys Knight
 Lenny Kravitz
 K D Lang
 John and Yoko Lennon
 Annie Lennox (Eurythmics/solo)
 Living Colour
 Lisa Loeb
 Olivia Newton John
 Sinead O'Connor
 Ozzy Osborne
 Prince
 Rikki Rocket (Poison)
 Siouxsie Sioux
 Grace Slick
 Ringo Starr
 Keni St George
 Charlie Watts (Stones)
 Vanessa Williams
 Yazz
 Dweezil, Moon, Ahmet, Diva Zappa
 Vanessa Warwick (MTV VJ)

MUSICIANS

Bryan Adams
 Rick Allen (Def Leppard)
 Dee Anderson
 Jon Anderson (Yes)
 Joan Baez (folk singer)
 Martin Barre (Jethro Tull)
 Blur
 Michael Bolton
 Elkie Brooks
 Peter Buck (REM)
 Kate Bush
 Terry "Geezer" Butler (Ozzy Osbourne)
 B52s
 Vivian Campbell (Def Leppard)
 Belinda Carlisle
 Neil Codling (Suede)
 Jessica Cody (Brunswick Spirit)
 Phil Collen (Def Leppard)
 Elvis Costello
 Dave Davies (Kinks)
 Des'ree (British pop singer)
 Michael Diamond (Beastie Boys)
 Corinne Drewery (Swing Out Sister)

All information courtesy of Vegetarian Pages: <http://old.veg.org>

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/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 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 other bowel diseases
If you want to live longer
If you want to live an honest 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 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 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 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 do not want to make your body a graveyard.

PLEDGE TO BE A VEGETARIAN

YES!!! I CARE ABOUT THE PAIN OF THE ANIMALS

YES!! I CARE ABOUT WORLD HUNGER

YES!! I CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PLANET EARTH

YES!! I WANT TO TAKE A STAND FOR NON-VIOLENCE

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

Beef *chicken* *fish* *eggs*

any animal by-products (including leather, silk, etc.)

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Email: _____

Please send your completed forms to:
H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji
Parmarth Niketan, P.O. Swargashram,
Rishikesh (Himalayas); Uttarakhand 249304, India

and know that you are one step closer to the Divine Life

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