

Jiva-Daya Seminar : Discussion on various issues

Jain Seminar (Narendra Sheth)

INTRODUCTION

We, most of the Jains, define Ahimsa as not eating meat. It is true, because there is a lot of Himsa in eating meat. When I was raised in India, I was taught to think, how I would feel, if some one tried to kill me for food. As I do not like to die, no one else likes to die either. So, that is how, we all Jains are vegetarians.

But, can Ahimsa stop there? No, Ahimsa also includes control over passions such as anger, greed, pride, jealousy, etc. But for a while, we will concentrate on the subject of how to treat animals. There has already been a lot of discussion on this subject, and we will do some more here. Are we aware, that many innocent looking ingredients in processed foods actually come from animal fats? Do we take time to learn about them, and to check for them carefully, every time we buy something? We will explore this question here in this discussion. We will also recognize, that it is not easy, especially in this country, it is not easy at all to follow the Jain guidelines perfectly. However, that does not mean, that we are hopeless. With certain determination, and certain education, may be, we can make ourselves better Jains in next 2 years.

We also want to focus on the subject of avoiding dissection in high schools. What about animal testing for cosmetics? Or animal ingredients in soaps, shampoos, and lipsticks? Where can we find cruelty-free products, and how do we identify them?

Many of us, even Jains, consider eggs acceptable. And almost everyone will argue why dairy products should be considered vegetarian. But today we would like to present our views on these items also. Please listen to us with an open mind.

Here we have assembled a very unique panel to address to all these issues. We have some Jains, and some non-Jains. Some are from Vegetarian Societies, some are from Animal Right Organizations, some are plain simple householders, and there is even one young student. And we all do believe here, and our motto stands here, that "Animals are not for ours to eat, wear, or to experiment on, or for our entertainment."

JAIN PERSPECTIVE FROM SCRIPTURES

(Saurabh Dalal is well known for his strong stand on a true cruelty-free life. He will talk about many indirect, unthought of connections of Himsa in our daily life, and how Jain scriptures relate to them. He has also joined many vegetarian and other compassionate groups, in a true Jain spirit. Recently he has been nominated to the Board of Directors of North American Vegetarian Union. He is also an active member of PETA, that is People for Ethical Treatment of Animals.)

We all know Ahimsa is a timeless and far-reaching concept. It can be applied to essentially every aspect of our lives. I'd like to get started with a few excerpts from Jain texts and scriptures. I hope this will reinforce the correlation between our religious philosophy and the practice of Ahimsa in our daily lives.

Let me quote the first perspective from Acharang Sootra, stanza 1.6.55. It says,

"Some kill living beings for sacrificial purposes, some kill for their skins, some kill for their flesh, some for the blood, heart, liver, fat, feathers, or teeth, some with specific reasons, some without reason, some out of fear (defense).

"He who is disinclined from killing the smallest living beings knows what suffering is because he who knows his own happiness and pains, knows others' too, and he who knows others' feelings knows his own feelings. This is the way one must compare himself with others. He who has obtained this knowledge would not wish to live at the expense of other living beings."

My next excerpt is from the Pratikraman, Lesson 7, First Minor Vow, Non-violence:

In reference to this vow to restrain from violence towards any creature, there are five acts or deeds which should be known and avoided. They are:

1. Tying animals where it could hurt them, or putting them in cages where there is no freedom,
2. Beating them with sticks or by any other means,
3. Piercing their nose, ear, or amputating limbs or any part of the body,
4. Making them carry heavy load, or
5. Depriving them of food, shelter, etc.

If I have indulged in any of the above acts, then may all my such sins be dissolved. TASSA MICHCHAMI DUKKADAM. (I seek forgiveness for all of it.)

My last excerpt is from the Pratikraman, Lesson 13, Seventh Vow, Number of Articles and Trades - 1st paragraph, and 15 specified trades:

The second supporting vow is to put restrictions to the amount and number of articles which can be used and re-used, and which trades should be avoided. When will that auspicious day come in my life, when I can take this vow to restrict the number of towels, napkins, bathing water, garments, tooth brushes, oils, lotions, pastes, cosmetics, ornaments, incenses, beverages, sweets, variety of grains, pulses, ghee, oil, milk, curds, green vegetables, fruits, number of items in diet, water, flowers, etc? I also desire that I be able to restrict the number of vehicles, footwear, beds, mattresses, animate things such as fruits with seeds, unboiled water, etc.

There are fifteen specified trades, which should be known and avoided. They are:

01. Trades in which furnaces are used,
02. Trades in which trees are cut,
03. Trades in fermented goods, such as liquor,
04. Trades in earning by way of renting animals, birds, etc.,
05. Trades involving excavations and explosions,
06. Trades in ivory, bones, horns, fur, etc.,
07. Trades in manufacturing or the processes concerned with crushing, etc

08. Trades in lard, honey, meat, fat, etc.,
09. Trades in sealing wax, etc.,
10. Trades in poisonous and toxic substances, such as opium, and pesticides
11. Trades in which animals, birds, fish, etc. are tortured or killed,
12. Trades in which animals, birds, etc. are amputated,
13. Trades in which fires are set in forests, fields, etc.,
14. Trades in which lakes, wells, ponds, etc. are dried up, or
15. Trades in which wicked men, prostitutes, or call girls are supported.

If I have indulged in any of the above fifteen specified trades, then may all my such sins be dissolved.
TASSA MICHCHAMI DUKKADAM. (I seek forgiveness for all of it.)

It is interesting to note that each of the topics which will be covered by the panelists here is addressed in some way by these excerpts. The Jain scriptures resound with insightful information. The ones chosen here merely indicate the body of the literature and texts. Please explore them on your own providing your thoughts and interpretations as well.

MILK AND ETHICS

(Joanne Stepaniak is an author, on vegetarian cookbooks. Her first book, "Ecological Cooking, Recipes to Save the Planet", is already published. She is currently writing another one for publication in January next year, titled "The Uncheese Cookbook". She will talk about milk. We have grown up with a notion, that cow's milk is as innocent as mother's milk. Well friends, that was true only in India. Not here in America anymore, and she will tell us why.)

I was not born into a vegetarian family, but at a very young age I came to believe that killing animals for food is wrong. By choosing vegetarianism though, I risked alienation from both my family and my friends. As I was growing up, my sisters often confronted me by asking, "How can you believe it is wrong to kill animals and wear leather shoes or carry a leather purse?" Of course they were right. But it was not until years later that seeds my sisters planted germinated and I came to understand that a vegan lifestyle, one which uses no animal products whatsoever, is the natural and dynamic interpretation of Ahimsa.

For most of us, changing our diet is one of the most difficult things for us to do. This is because our emotions are so deeply connected to the foods we eat. For vegetarians, consuming dairy products is often a last dietary tie to mainstream society. I know firsthand how hard it is to be different or to go against the grain. Ethical vegetarians, on the other hand, continue to eat dairy products primarily for one or two factors. One, a lack of knowledge of information. Or two, what the Dinshah's of the American Vegan Society have termed "psychological numbing" or basically a denial of the truth. We do this for several reasons.

1. Milk may remind us of when we were infants nursing at our mother's breast - a time when life was simple, secure, and all our needs were taken care of. This is why milk is often called a "comfort food."
2. Dairy foods may remind us of happy occasions, family dinners and gatherings, holidays, celebration and other special times when these traditional foods are served.

3. We may not want to offend someone who has lovingly prepared a dish that contains dairy products.
4. If we are truly honest with ourselves, we will admit that dairy foods just plain taste good. And we may enjoy them far too much to even want to give them up.

But let's consider why human beings drink milk in the first place - milk that is designed to nutritionally, biologically and

psychologically to sustain and nurture not human beings but young calves! I believe the answer is simple. We drink cow's milk because we can. We do not drink the milk of elephants, or take the milk of tigers or even use the milk of horses. We take the milk of some of the sweetest and most docile creatures on earth - animals that can be easily herded, harnessed and controlled. We drink cow's milk because we can.

But there are two very odd things about our drinking cow's milk. First, human beings are the only specie of mammal that drinks milk throughout adulthood. In other words, we are the only mammal that is never weaned. Furthermore, we are the only specie of mammal that drinks the milk of another specie! To realize how absurd this truly is, imagine a cat suckling a pig or a dog suckling a horse, or - and this is what we are truly doing when we consume milk - a human being suckling a cow's udder.

We have been mislead in this country to believe that milk comes from contented cows living on idyllic country homesteads, generously giving us what is meant for their babies. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dairy cows are confined to concrete stalls 10 months out of the year, attached to electric milking machines 3 times a day, and forced to produce 3 to 4 times more milk than their progenitors. They are medicated, tranquilized, implanted with hormones, artificially inseminated and kept perpetually pregnant for one purpose only - to provide continual production of milk at the cheapest possible cost.

Their daughters are born into the same lifelong enslavement. But their sons face an even more gruesome tribulation. From birth they are chained and immobilized, forced to suffer deliberately induced anemia, and confined to wooden crates no bigger than an unfolded newspaper so that as they grow their crate becomes smaller and smaller. They are unable to experience even the most rudimentary pleasures of life such as nuzzling and nursing their mother, licking themselves, walking or even lying down! - until at the mere age of 4 months, these normally wide-eyed and frisky youngsters will be brutally slaughtered to be turned into that gastronomical delicacy called veal.

Their mothers, spent and exhausted, will endure only 4 years of what would normally be a 20-25 year lifespan. When they can no longer produce the demanded level of milk, they will be packed onto trucks for transport to their final destination - the slaughterhouse. There is no denying the ghastliness of the dairy industry and its extricable correlation to the horrors of meat production.

Those of us who strive and follow the path of Ahimsa must ask ourselves is this - once we are aware of and understand all of the implications and motivations behind our dietary choices, can we, in good conscience, continue to justify and rationalize choosing dairy? (An another point to consider is that we know that many of our Indian people die of heart diseases. One of the reasons is that our diet is very rich in dairy products, such as ghee, butter, cheese, and sweets, especially in the affluent Indian society. We definitely need to consider, very seriously, this link of high cholesterol and heart problems, and drastically cut down, if not totally eliminate, these milk products, for our own health, if not for cows.)

EGGS - CHECKING INGREDIENTS LIST - RESTAURANTS

(Now we will hear a young speaker, Miss Michelle Grant. Outside she looks and feels very much like a college student. But inside she is a pretty mature person. Born in a typical American family, she knew meat

and potato more than broccoli and bread. But some seven years ago she had a change of heart. I would like to say that she became a Jain! As a teenager, she had a tough time facing her family, but still she became a vegetarian. And now in order to help others, she has started a group, called "Go Vegetarians!" Let us hear her side on vegetarianism.)

I will talk on the social conflicts with being a vegetarian, checking food labels, having grocery stores and restaurants become more responsive to vegetarianism and the problems with eating eggs.

After being here this weekend at the Jain Convention, I am convinced at least in theory that those practicing Jainism are all vegetarians, and many of you are lifelong vegetarians, so it isn't considered unnatural either.

In countries like the United States, vegetarians are still considered strange. And while vegetarianism is becoming more trendy, we still need to make the food industry aware of the fact that there is a demand for this way of eating.

At this time they don't always make things easy for vegetarians when we are eating out or grocery shopping. When eating out in a restaurant you aren't familiar, always make the server aware that your party is vegetarian and if they don't offer anything on the menu, request something special. Some chefs may turn their noses up at this, but most are willing and able to accommodate vegetarians and they like being given an opportunity to experiment with their creative and challenging fare.

When you're grocery shopping, it's inevitable that you will have to read labels on some products. I won't go through a long list of what is in various products. I use a very simple formula, because I am not a chemist: "If it has 15 letter words that I can't understand, I don't buy it." It's probably not good for me anyway. There are groups like the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, based in Boston, MA, that publish a comprehensive list of ingredients and whether those are vegetarian or not.

Now as I understand it, the Jain religion does not allow eggs to be eaten, although I'm sure that at least some of you probably consume them. Let me tell you, how these eggs are produced.

Layer hens, the chickens used to lay eggs for consumption, are typically raised in an intense mechanized system, four to five birds may inhabit one cage, a little larger than the size of a record cover. They can't even spread their wings.

In order to keep them from pecking one another due to stress, the farmers cut off their beaks, which is a painful procedure. They may also cut part of their toes to prevent fighting. The chicken spend about 9 months laying eggs before their productivity begins to wane.

The feeding, water and waste removal is done entirely by machines. Even the lighting, which is kept at a dim level, is mechanized. They never experience sunlight until they are sent to be slaughtered, and their bodies used for meat. Literally thousands of birds are in each large barn like this.

All of their instincts to walk, scratch, dust bath, and roost are taken away from them. So even though no animal is actually killed for eggs (except that an unborn chicken that could have lived), tremendous suffering is prevalent. And in the end, they are slaughtered and used as by-products in dog or cat food or as an ingredient in soup or in anything else.

There are many vegetarian techniques to replace eggs. You could simply use egg-replacer sold at stores, or use tofu in your cooking. Or you can see some of the books being sold by many vegetarian vendors.

HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS, CRUELTY-FREE SHOPPING

(All our knowledge about the cruelty-free items comes our Gurus at various vegetarian societies and animal right groups. One such Guru is present here, Mrs. Freya Dinshah. She runs the American Vegan Society, with her husband Jay. The Vegan Society holds its own annual conventions like ours. They also publish a magazine, "AHIMSA", that inspires, as the name implies, to Ahimsa life. Today we will hear from her, about the many animal ingredients found in many household cleansers, soaps, and shampoos, and more importantly, how and where to buy clean, cruelty-free products.)

To talk about cleaning (whether cleaning the home or our body), we need to first understand a little about soap and detergents. Soap is made by the action of a strong alkali (such as lye from wood ash; or soda ash from brine) on a fat. The process is called saponification. The fats can be either animal fats (from the meat industry) or plant fats and oils (such as coconut oil, olive oil, etc.). In Western countries mostly animal fats have been used because they are abundantly available with the need to use up these "by products" of a meat-eating culture. They have also been comparatively (if artificially) cheap. Tallow is the name given to fat from cattle and sheep. There is also pig fat, called lard.

A by-product of soap manufacture is glycerin, which is an ingredient found in many cosmetics, body creams, lotions, shampoos, toothpastes, and so on. It is a solvent, humectant, and emollient. Whether glycerin is of animal or vegetable origin depends on the fat source used in making the soap.

Detergent (using the word as it is commonly applied to laundry and dishwashing products) are not prepared with fats and oils as are soaps. They have certain advantages over soap in that they do not produce a scum when used in hard water, they don't leave a whitish residue on glassware, or leave a dullness of hair. Detergents are made from fatty alcohols, which can be derived from various sources. Originally, the source was from the body oil of whales; later sources have been coconut oil, palm kernel oil, and tallow. Today, the fatty alcohols mostly come from the petrochemical industry, made from propylene gas.

In the U.S., such companies as Procter and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, Arm and Hammer, are not using animal derivatives in their laundry and dishwashing detergents, according to information available from them. This is not necessarily true in other countries where local conditions, customs, and the availability of raw materials may be different from in the U.S.

Many other agents are added to the basic detergent to increase its action, and some of these are trade secrets. Also, a firm may tell you what they think you want to hear; or they may classify as "non-animal" (in its pure state) a chemical that has been refined from a raw material such as tallow.

Detergents create environmental problems. They make foam in rivers, and retard natural sewage breakdown in septic systems. If they contain phosphate, this feeds and promotes a choking growth of undesirable algae and bacteria in waterways. And, the industry tests new products on animals. It is better to stick to older products that are known to work well. More important than this is to use products with no animal ingredients, because animals are always suffering and killed for ingredients, whereas animal testing is time-limited. (Each year, "food animals" slaughtered outnumber lab animals by a ratio estimated at anywhere from 60:1 to 100:1.)

A soap shampoo contains oil (mostly coconut oil, a little olive oil), some alcohol and about 50% glycerol (animal or vegetable in origin). Soapless shampoos, detergents, contain about 50% sodium lauryl sulfate (a synthetic detergent derived from coconut), and sodium stearate (from either animal or vegetable fats). The fragrance is usually from herbs. Cream shampoos usually contain lanolin (wool fat), and opacifiers (probably from animals). Special-purpose shampoos may contain egg, conditioning agents from plants, and glycerin. Keratin is a protein derived from wool or feathers used in shampoos to mend hair damaged by permanent waves.

What Can We Use?

First, let us consider basic simple products. In the supermarket you can find coconut oil based soap (a kosher bar soap), and vegetable glycerin body soap (such as Clearly Natural available on the east and west coast of U.S.). From janitor supply places you can get liquid hand soap. (liquid soaps are more often vegetable based than are bar soaps.) This can be used for baths, and with washing soda for laundry purposes. It is called coconut oil soap but actually contains more tall oil from pine trees a by-product of paper making. ("Tall" is the Swedish name for the pine.) People with sensitive skin may find the mild bar soaps more suitable for the bath.

Good cleaning agents from the supermarket are: vinegar, lemon juice, borax, baking soda, washing soda, rubbing alcohol, feldspar cleanser (Bon Ami Polishing Cleanser), ammonia. Most of these have cleaning directions on the box. (Some "environmental" products are such basic substances packaged at a fancy price.)

An easy way to find other products, especially toiletries, cosmetics, and cleaning products, is to order from mail-order companies that handle only items without animal ingredients; such firms are listed in Ahimsa magazine (from the American Vegan Society, Box H, Malaga NJ 08328). The people we list are known by us to be conscientious about researching any item they sell.

Health Food Stores carry a number of items that you can recognize if they are clearly labelled. A valuable listing is prepared by Beauty Without Cruelty N.Y. (Charity) of companies that do not test on animals; different symbols indicate products which do not contain any animal ingredients; those that do contain beeswax or lanolin; and those with slaughterhouse ingredients. A helpful booklet is also sold by AVS, titled "Animal Ingredients And Their Alternatives".

SILK, LEATHER, PEARLS, IVORY, SHOWOFF ITEMS

(Now Saurabh Dalal will talk about his personal experiences with cruelty-free life. He also has a very strong commitment against use of silk, leather, pearls, ivory, and other show-off items. Now we will hear from him, why, and what are the alternatives that he recommends.)

I'd like to first give you a brief background about myself. I am a Jain and was brought up in a fairly normal Jain environment. My parents have been fairly active in the Jain community - my father who many of you may know has done quite a lot with the Jain community here and my mother who has been devoted and very firm in her convictions to the religion.

A few years ago, I started to question many aspects of my life as most people do from time to time. I also started meeting a lot of people who lived very unique, more cruelty-free lifestyles. These people had made many changes in their lives. As for diet, they had gone from a meat-centered one to vegetarianism to a vegan or no-animal product whatsoever diet. This vegan diet refrains from consuming meat, fish, and fowl as well as even dairy products, honey, gelatin and the like. Being vegetarian was easy for me; I had to do very little as I was brought up that way.

These vegan individuals amazed me and I took great interest in learning more about their ideas and way of living. Needless to say, these people were a tremendous inspiration and my transition to a vegan lifestyle made me appreciate the sacrifices and difficulties that they and others had gone through. Giving up foods which I enjoyed very much and was very accustomed to was somewhat difficult. The point here is that by consuming these items and implicitly supporting those industries, I was directly responsible for the suffering of many animals.

Along with diet, the vegan lifestyle involves choices each of us makes as consumers. Clothing is one such

area which holds so much importance. From the available literature, I began realizing some very shocking facts about the manufacture and processing of the everyday things we wear. I became more aware of the great deal of violence involved in silk, leather, down, wool and others as they applied to clothing.

First I'd like to address silk. Silkworms, at a certain stage in their lives, go through a metamorphosis where they turn into butterfly like moths. In preparation for this process, a silkworm spends a week spinning a protective cocoon. It will reside within this cocoon for two to three weeks enabling the transformation. Although the cocoon is basically the silkworm's dry and hardened saliva, it is also a continuous, fine, silky thread which can be many hundreds of feet in length when unraveled. If the silk moth emerges from the cocoon, the thread breaks into many small, commercially less worthy pieces. Therefore, the manufacture of silk requires the killing of the insect inside the cocoons by either placement in boiling water or drying in ovens. About 2500 silkworms are required to yield a single pound of raw silk. This translates to many hundreds of silkworms for an impure silk tie and several thousand for an impure silk saree - shocking numbers indeed! Can we instead beautify our bodies with polyester, rayon, nylon, silk tree fibers or even cotton fabrics? The time to question our traditional view on silk as exquisite is long overdue.

Now I'd like to talk about leather. Leather is the chief "by-product" of the meat industry and its use directly and significantly contributes to the profits of that industry. When we buy leather, we're bringing the price of meat down; we're making it more economical for the meat industry to be in business. The purchase of leather shoes, belts, bags, jackets, seats/furniture, sporting goods, etc. contributes to keeping the slaughterhouses running - a business activity which we all are so morally against. Many animals like cows, pigs, horses, sheep, goats, and buffaloes are killed for their flesh and hides as well as "exotic" and sometimes endangered animals like kangaroos, alligators, snakes, and ostriches. Worth noting further is that leather and other hides are not by-products in the true sense of the word because many animals are now raised primarily for their skins. Canvas, rubber, cotton, and synthetics like plastic and vinyl are all durable and usually less expensive alternatives. They can even be "Better Than Leather" as you might have seen on some synthetic product descriptions and do not require mass slaughter or the savage hunt. Although some synthetics at present are environmentally unfriendly, the leather industry quietly causes severe environmental problems as well and the products are far from bio-degradable. We can choose to not involve ourselves in the exploitation of animals and support other industries which may, in turn, improve their manufacturing processes. can perhaps resolve to limit our overall purchases thereby minimizing the extent of our harm to the environment as well. I'd like to emphasize that the story behind down, wool, and fur is pretty much the same as what I've just described.

Other items which are related and whose use also involve much harm are pearls and ivory. Many of us may wear or have pearls and not really understand the way in which they are obtained. A pearl is produced as a response to a foreign substance such as sand which may enter inside an oyster. Because the oyster is not accustomed to having this painful particle, it secretes a liquidy substance to surround the particle and hence, dull the pain. This secretion solidifies and is called nacre or mother-of-pearl. The larger the foreign matter, the greater the intensity of pain. The larger foreign particle results in a greater secretion which becomes a larger pearl. Cultured pearls are produced by artificially inserting a foreign particle inside individual oysters on a mass scale. Over a period of years, each oyster deposits layers of nacre around this substance to ease the pain. Since the hope of cultured pearls is to yield pearls of greater size, a slightly larger starter particle is used to build up from. When it comes down to it, pearls are a product of pain. A cultured pearl is perhaps even a product of greater pain. To remove a pearl from an oyster often means killing the oyster. How badly do we need such decorative items around our necks? As I'm sure you're aware, alternatives are readily available.

Ivory is obtained by removing the tusks of elephants which many times has required or resulted in the killing of the elephant. When the elephant is not killed, one can imagine the pain it must go through. An international ban on the trade of ivory has been imposed to reduce the demand for this item which has translated to the deaths of so many elephants each year. Even with the ban, many people continue to purchase

ivory. Since the demand continues, people called poachers illegally continue to kill elephants for their ivory because it is so lucrative. Numerous plastic alternatives exist which can be substituted for show pieces which traditionally would have been made from ivory. Vegetable ivory is also available which is derived from the ivory palm. The question is the same - how badly do we need these items which require pain and death?

These ideas I'm sure are all interesting and sometimes even informative but the importance is lost if we do nothing about them. We must continually find new ways to incorporate less violent and more humane ideas into our daily lives. I think that is the gist of what I'm trying to share with you. Firstly, please be open to learning - the literature is abundant with evidence, facts, studies and so on. We have a number of organizations that have tremendous information. Please go visit them and talk to the people there.

We can accomplish so much more if we all work together. Jains can get more involved. We need to start a Jain Vegan Network. I think it is a very interesting idea and if any of you are also interested, I'd very much like to talk to you.

Jai Jinendra and Jai Ahimsa.

DRAIZE TEST, ETC. - PROCTOR GAMBLE

(A young Jain lady, Miss Mona Shah, will take this subject further into what is in the heart of all the girls, the cosmetics! An innocent looking pretty lipstick may not necessarily be innocent. Not only an animal's fat may have gone into making it, it may also have been cruelly tested on animals. Recently we have become aware about them, because of publicity in the media, about what these tests are, and that many big companies are under pressure to abandon them. Mona will tell us more about them in details.)

Each year some 14 million animals suffer and die as a result of testing for cosmetic and personal care products. Animals are put through a great deal of torture and pain to satisfy one's personal vanity.

Some examples of the test that are conducted upon animals include:

The Draize Test where ingredients are applied to rabbits' eyes in order to measure irritation.

Another is the LD-50 where animals are forced to ingest large amounts of potentially lethal substances.

And finally, the Acute Dermal Toxicity test where substances are rubbed into animals' skin to check for irritation.

These tests have been painful and many times fatal to the animals. However, this was thought to be the only real way to determine if the chemicals are harmful.

But this is no longer the case. Today there exists many alternatives to animal testing.

One of these is In Vitro Testing where tests are conducted on human or animal cells rather than on whole animals.

Another alternative is relying upon natural ingredients and formulations that have already been tested and approved. Since synthetic ingredients are the reason safety test are needed, it may make sense for companies to go back to nature and incorporate time-tested plant and herb extracts into cosmetics.

Thankfully, many big cosmetic companies have started employing some of these alternatives within the past few years and have reduced or ceased animal testing all together.

The Body Shop debuted in 1976 and has championed environmentally sound principles such as natural, non-animal tested ingredients.

Estee Lauder has replaced the Draize Test with a series of four In-Vitro tests.

And other companies such as Revlon, Dial, Avon, and Neutrogena have ceased animal testing all together within the past 3 years.

Therefore, as we look to the future, the good news is that since the 1980's the number of rabbits undergoing the Draize test has decreased by 87% and the number of animals used in all other tests fell by 73%. However, there is still a great deal of progress to be made. Proctor and Gamble is a major company who continues to this day to test upon animals. But they too, will stop the testing if they are forced to do so. The decision lies within all of us. I'm not saying "Don't use cosmetics" because I use cosmetics too. What I am saying is that there are many choices which are available to us, so please be aware of the company's background when making that choice. And then hopefully animal testing for cosmetic purposes will cease altogether in the near future.

(If you are employed by a company that conducts these tests, as a Jain, you should refuse to do so. Very few Jains, if any, would work in a meat processing plant, or a meat serving restaurant. Several years ago I put my well established job on line, when I came across preparing price proposal for a tuna-fishing company.)

DISSECTION IN CLASSROOMS - 800 HELP HOTLINE

(All the high school students taking biology, go through a very traumatic experience, called dissection of a frog. We normally take it for granted, that it is the only way of learning what is inside the body. But American Anti- Vivisection Society does not agree with it. Neither does Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicines. And both of these groups are very prestigious and professional. Our older son recollects that he felt very shaken up, when he experienced dissection of a frog. At that time we were not aware about our rights against it, but by the time when our second son's turn came, we were prepared. We asked for an alternative, and we got one. Our next speaker, who is a similar student, and the youngest one in our group, is Maulin Shah. He will talk about his personal experience, and what the alternatives he might have taken, if he had known earlier.)

I am a junior at Diamond Bar High School in the State of California. I have experienced the traumatic feeling of dissecting a frog. A frog is not the only thing that is on a teacher's agenda to dissect during the whole school year. The students and teachers at my school have also dissected a worm, a cow's eye, and a pig's brain. The brain, however, was only dissected by the teacher and observed by students.

My feelings towards this issue are fairly mixed. In one way I think it is a very educational process. But in another way it is also very cruel and inhumane. The human society today is very dependent on exact information. A lot of the schools prefer that the students get to dissect the frog because it supposedly teaches them some moral values of life.

Many students like myself do not know that they have rights against dissecting a frog. If I had known about these rights I might have not done what I did. I got lucky, because my eighth grade Biology teacher respected me for my religion and let me partner up with another person. My partner did all of the dissecting and I did all the identifying. However, some schools even let you bring a letter from a parent or guardian saying they do not want their child to dissect a frog or another animal and the teacher will give the student another assignment to work on.

There are, however, several alternatives to dissecting a frog. These alternatives would be a video made by

Instructavision called "The Frog Inside- Out" which shows the external and internal structures of the frog and compares them with human structures. Other video's would be the "Frog Dissection Explained", and "Dissection of the Frog" which show an "anatomical" model of the frog where the frog can be taken apart or put back together. Schools also have the choice of using computer simulations such as "Operation Frog" from Scholastic Software.

In 1989, the State of California passed the CA AB 2507, which allows students to choose whether they want to participate in the dissecting of animals in science classes. California is the first state to pass such a law. There is also a Student Hotline to help students, teachers, and school officials to understand and respect the students' rights. The phone number to this hotline is 1-800-922-FROG.

There are a substantial number of frogs being killed for their use in science. In my school district, there are only two high schools. In each high school, there are about five teachers that teach about five classes each day. If you do some adding, you will find out that there are ten teachers in our district. If you multiply ten times five, you get fifty classes. With about thirty students in each class, you get 1,500 students. The teachers usually partner students up now because of the budget cuts. If you do all of that number crunching, you would get about 750 frogs. This is only in my district. There are over 700 such districts in the State of California. If you look in this way at each district, the total number frogs killed would come out to 525,000 frogs a semester in California. However, this number is low, because some districts have up to five high schools, so the actual number of frogs killed is even higher.

When you are refusing to dissect an animal, you should know how far you are willing to go, and accept your limitations. You should also ask your teacher before the school year starts whether you will be required to dissect. If your teacher does expect you to dissect, tell him or her right away that you do not want to do it. Be ready to tell your teacher the reason why do not want to dissect and when you do tell your teacher, be sure to be kind to him or her. Some teachers do not know any other way of teaching science because that's how they were taught. If you respect your teacher's beliefs, they will respect yours. Always be ready to face arguments against your beliefs. Always keep notes about who you talked to and what you said to that person. Put dates on your notes just in case you need to use them at a later time. And if you need help or advice, feel free to call the Student Hotline. The number again is, 1-800-922-FROG.

(If you do some number crunching, you will notice that it comes to 5 million frogs a year, all over the nation. We can save 5 million lives, by switching to video and computer based alternatives or plastic models. All the Jain students should take leadership in this area.)

ANIMALS IN ENTERTAINMENT

(We all visit circus, zoo and sea world for fun, thinking that it is also educational for our children. But have we ever considered, what the animals behind the bars feel like? What if it were you? Would you like a punishment of lifetime confinement in a room, without ever having done any crime? Would you like to perform abnormal yogasans, for the fear of being whipped by your trainer? We also buy pets for company. Aren't they cute and beautiful? But again, is it their natural life? Miss Tracy Eakin is an Animal Advocate for these poor, voiceless animals. She will now present her case.)

Some people see animals as a form of entertainment, instead of as individuals who deserve the chance to live natural lives in their natural habitats. These people that exploit animals in the name of entertainment would like you to believe that they are well-treated and content. The grisly reality behind this facade reveals quite a different picture. Animals forced to perform in shows, races, or other forms of entertainment are the unfortunate victims whose physical, social, and behavioral needs are often ignored by those who profit from their misuse.

This manipulation of animals in the entertainment industry exists in many forms: as zoo's, circuses, horse and dog races, rodeo's, petting zoo's, and many more. These animals are inhumanely acquired, confined, trained, and subsequently disposed of.

Animals that appear in zoo's and circuses are stolen from their natural habitats as babies. Often, the mother must be killed as she fights to protect her little ones. These animals are taken away from their natural environment, are placed into unnatural settings, and often are subjected to climates that nature did not prepare them for. For example, the hot summer months can be extraordinarily hard on bears, while lions suffer while in cold climates.

Physical punishment has long been the standard training method. The whips, muzzles, and electric prods that are used during circus acts should serve as a reminder that the animals are being forced to perform stunts that they instinctively know to be dangerous. The only way to get a lion to jump through a flaming hoop is if he thinks there is even greater punishment if he doesn't.

In greyhound dog racing, dogs are trained to chase mechanical "lures" by first being taught to chase and kill live rabbits, kittens, and other small animals. The rabbit's leg is broken to prevent him from escaping the chasing dogs. Harmful drugs abound in the horse and dog racing industries as animals are often forced to race despite being injured. The painful devices used in rodeo's such as the bucking strap, electric prod, spurs, and caustic ointments are considered to be so inhumane that the City of Pittsburgh has outlawed rodeo's that use such devices.

Consider also the confinement and the travelling conditions of animals forced to perform. Zoo's claim to provide education, research, and preservation of species. All too often they provide pitiful prisons that do not enable the animal to live as it was naturally intended to, and thereby do little to educate people of their normal behavior. Birds often have their wings clipped so they can not fly, aquatic animals are given little water to swim in, and animals that congregate naturally in herds are often kept alone or with one another animal. They also usually stock the animals that will draw large crowds. Most of these animals are not endangered.

The same confinement that animals in entertainment are forced to endure is also common with some animals that can be purchased at pet stores. When animals are kept in small cages their entire lives, such as birds, hamsters, salamanders, and iguanas, they are deprived of the freedom of mobility to explore and travel as they would in a natural habitat.

Animals forced to travel endure constant stress. They often suffer from temperature extremes and irregular feeding and watering. Without exercise, they become prone to illness; many resort to self-mutilation in reaction to stress of boredom. Petting zoo animals are subjected to the stress from constant travel. These temporary structures that they are displayed in may provide poor protection from the hot pavement underneath, or not enough shade from the sun.

Other travelling animal acts include wrestling bears and diving mules. These acts may appear at the grand openings of shopping malls, at county fairs, or at local bars. The wrestling bear may be drugged and have his teeth and claws surgically impaired. Diving mules must jump off of a tall platform only to plunge into a large tub of water. In bullfights, bulls are tormented to produce aggressive behavior. They are debilitated with laxatives, blinded with petroleum jelly, kept in the darkness before being thrust into the bright arena, and often have their horns shaved to reduce their ability to defend themselves.

Once animals have outlived their performing "usefulness" they may be sold to game farms where they may be shot for recreation or for exotic meat, or they may also be sold to research laboratories. Some animals, such as racing greyhounds last only a few years in the entertainment industry. They often end their lives no

more peacefully or comfortably than they lived them: in confinement, coercion, and misery.

The USDA sets minimum standards of care under some circumstances, but constant traveling and the sheer number of animal acts make proper enforcement impossible. The animals used in rodeos are not protected at all by federal laws. So, the best way to eliminate the abuse of performing animals is to boycott such events; when the profits disappear, so will the cruelty.

CONSTANT VIGILANCE - PHONE CALLS & LETTERS

(Our last speaker is Mrs. Sonal Sheth. She is founder, president of Jain Society of San Diego. If you guessed, that she is my wife, you are right. Both of us have slowly learned, after coming to America, how much diligent and watchful we need to remain, so we do not harm any creature. It is not easy. But sure it is possible, and she will tell how. You have heard many ideals from all these speakers. Now she will tell how she has brought them home.)

In order to bring change in our life, first necessity is knowledge. About 15 years ago, I found out the fact as Saurabh mentioned about silk. My next step was to find alternatives. After I stopped buying silk, I found other verities to choose from. My selection narrowed, but still I was able to buy enough sarees that I needed. And, one of the alternatives that I found was to buy Ahimsak silk from Khadi Bhandar. That one is a little bit rougher than the finer one, but still it is ok and acceptable.

Then a question came in my mind, "what should I do with the old sarees that I had already bought out of ignorance?" Then I considered, "what would I do if I have a piece of meat in my pizza?" The answer is, I would throw away the whole pizza, and so the same way I threw away all the silk sarees that I had.

Slowly after silk, we realized about leather and we started looking for alternatives. We found out that most of the Payless Shoes Source shoes and purses are made from man-made materials, so we shop there mostly. Also, now we do not buy leather wallets, belts, or watchbands. Naturally, we would not buy a car with leather seats either.

After finding alternates for silk and leather, for a while, we thought that our house was clean. But no! We had yet to realize, that not all the food items we thought were vegetarian, were really 100% vegetarian! For example, some yogurts had gelatine, some food fattening included lard, most of the lecithins and glycerides did not identify source, most of the cheeses were coagulated with animal rennet or pork, and so on. We had some work to do. We started a project of calling or writing letters to manufacturers, which we still do today. We made our own list of acceptable groceries!

At the same time I found out about cruelties being involved in manufacture of cosmetics, as Freya and others mentioned before me. Immediately I started again calling the companies, and finding alternatives. Initially we found cruelty free products at health food stores and specialty mail order businesses, but now a days it has become easy to get at least some cruelty free products in the regular supermarkets too. When we called the mail order houses for cosmetics, we learned that they carried cruelty free household cleaning items too. Now we buy only cruelty free soap, shampoo, dishwashing detergent, laundry detergent, etc.

There is one area in which I would like to thank my mother. When we were young, she used to tell us not to have pets, but I did not understand the reason at that time. Anyway, she did not buy me an aquarium for me, as I wanted. But recently we realized the reason. Our children wanted a hamster. We bought one. We were all excited to watch her. But soon we also saw that she was very uncomfortable inside the cage. Many times, in her two years of life, she successfully tried to escape, and every time we found and put her back in the cage. We could not bear this. We thought of taking her into jungle and setting her free there. But we were afraid that she may not survive there on her own. I felt very sad, and remembered that mother was right. But it was

too late. After that, we have never had any pets.

One last thing I would like to mention is the medicines. Most of the medicines have animal ingredients, and they are tested on animals. We are still working on this area.

In the end, I would like to urge you to think seriously about the cruelties involved in all these areas. I hope, that this seminar was informative to you. Please visit health food stores, talk to salespersons, find cruelty free products, buy them, and try them. If you need any help, feel free to call me at (619) 693-8272.

Jai Jinendra.

CONCLUSION

Now conclude with a very short summary. There is always a room for improvement in our life. It is possible, and it is not as difficult as it may appear, to live a better Ahimsak life, than what we may be living now. Two years from now we will again take a review, of how much we have improved, how much closer we are living the ideal life that Bhagwan Mahavir has preached in the scriptures, the fundamental principles for us the householders, the Shravaks.

Jai Jinendra.