Vol 23 No 2 Summer-Monsoon 2000

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

JOURNAL OF BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY INDIA

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Beauty Without Cruelty

INDIA

An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

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Editorial

Surprised at the number of pages in this issue? Our printer also tells us it is an all-time first. Well, if you are wondering whether this is to be the standard size of the *Compassionate Friend* henceforth, we are sorry to have to disappoint you by telling you that it is not so: this has happened only because we decided to amalgamate the Summer and Monsoon issues of the year 2000 into one.

In the months that passed, all of India was abuzz with one issue—milk—arising out of the statement of Maneka Gandhi, our Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, that the consumption of (animal) milk was akin to the consumption of blood. While her choice of words was controversial, the reactions published to it (from various individuals and organisations working either for animals or using animals) were disappointingly characterised by a display of close-minded orthodoxy and an unfortunate lack of knowledge of reality with maybe a more unfortunate desire to conceal this knowledge where present. For how can stalwarts of the dairy industry not relate her metaphor of blood with the deliberate killing (by starvation or selling for slaughter) of male calves that happens in dairies across the country? It is impossible that they do not know that it happens, it is a well-acknowledged (if only in hushed, private conversations) phenomenon in the dairy industry. The sight of buffalo calves tied to each other neck to neck and being marched off prodded by stick is common. That the destination of these calves is the local slaughterhouse is common knowledge to all (although the person marching them off is tight-lipped when asked). That their source is the local dairy is, however, the vital piece of information that makes Maneka's metaphor highly apt.

Maneka's comment has coincidentally come at the exact time that we wanted to present to you the issue of veganism. The new feature called *The Vegan Column* that we start with this issue will henceforth address topics related exclusively to those items of animal origin that the strictest of vegetarians in our culture have not thought it wrong to use, namely, milk, wool, and honey. Through this column we hope to arouse your interest in the philosophical and the practical angles of veganism, by sharing with you recipes that are free of milk, by sharing with you people's accounts of their experiments with veganism, by pointing you to sources of vegan articles, *etc.* Above all, the goal of the column is to present to you the notion that vegetarianism is not the end of the road as far as the ethics of our treatment of animals is concerned.

We also apologize for the delay in coming out with our new brochure that we had promised in our last issue. We ask for your patience for one more issue, and we promise that the wait will be worth it.

Meanwhile, keep the xeroxes of the signature sheets coming (with your name on them, please, otherwise how do we identify the person who took the trouble?), as well as the membership update forms.

Happy reading. ■

R R Konkar

Ranjit Konkar
Editor

Responses received for Children's page

We did receive a couple of letters from people eager to contribute to a children's page, for which we are grateful, but the articles have not been of the nature we were looking for. Remember, we are looking for material that is educative (in respect to animals), attractive, pictorial, and above all, entertaining. *Not* heavy, serious, philosophical essays nor abstruse poems, however good their literary merit. We are looking for graphic word games (for example, wordsearch, crossword), puzzles and picture games (mazes, snakes and ladders,...), quizzes, cartoons, and the like. So do come forward with more of those.

Our Overflowing Mailbox

In order to retain as much of the personal style of the individual and as much of the local flavour of his place as possible, we publish excerpts from letters *verbatim*, including the punctuation (except when it would confuse the readers) and mistakes in language. So please do not let that colour your views on our editing capability. Hey, we have enough work keeping our own English correct; can't spend time correcting *others*'! ☺ — *Editor*

Respected Sirs and Madam,

I am very happy to inform you that we gained Rs. 300 every month because of changing into the vegan lifestyle. A few months ago, I felt that it was impossible to give up milk foods from my life, as it is a habit from my childhood...My mrs., Sujatha, and my son, Sujan Tathagata, are cooperating very much to my vegan life...Instead of the curd rice, I am taking watered rice (*ganji annam*) with a little salt. My son praised me for inventing the new type of rice and he also taking it very interestingly. I told my boy, that it is only the food of the common man of our country, we must live as common man as he is more vegetarian than the so called lacto-vegetarians...My mrs. stopped to 'on' the refrigerator as it is unnecessary when we are not using the milk and curd. So we may gain at least Rs. 70 after two months in every month. By the gift of the vegan life, I have full freedom to spend my money for my ideals than before.

D. Nataraj, Vishakhapatnam

From: Ramesh Jhaveri

To: <bwc@vsnl.com>

The issue #1 of Spring 2000 of ***Compassionate Friend***, after a relaxing break of a year, has come out with lot of vibrance. One feel as if the issue is "talking" with you. The different sections which has much less borrowed news, makes it more interesting to read. Congratulation to you and good wishes for the success of your goals.

Do write to us:
Beauty Without Cruelty
4 Prince of Wales' Drive,
Wanowrie, Pune 411 040,
INDIA

From: SOORAJ

To: <bwc@vsnl.com>

hey there, thanx fer the compassionate friend. i've already posted the protest letters, but i'm sorry, i forgot to take the xerox copies and post them to you. anyway, keep up the good work. and, about the papers that you use, to print all these pamphlets etc., are these taken by destroying the habitats of the wonderful creatures we are striving to help or are they recycled? it would be much appreciated if the paper used was recycled, setting an example to the world. bye,

Sooraj.

Editor: Something (recycling) we agree with entirely, and want to make part of our organisational ethics. By the way, if you didn't know, we do follow our own ethic of not using animal products even in our choice of paper: the glossy paper we use—so frequently made using gelatine—is *free of gelatine!* It is not the cheapest paper, but at least no animals were killed for it.

From: Jenny Williams

Subject: thank you for this organazation

all i wanted to say is im a 6th grader and i have to do a report on animals. i decided to do animal rights i told my class about your organazation and they all say thank you. thank you so much i really look up to you.

Molly

P.S. I got a 100 on my report!

From: <admin@bwcindia.org>

To: Jenny Williams

Dear Molly,

We were very happy to hear from you. Especially since you chose a topic of animal rights for a class presentation. Congratulations for the good score!

Very often we ignore our animal friends and also heap a lot of abuse on them, without being aware of this. Beginning to realise this is the first step towards showing compassion towards them and treating them with the respect they deserve.

If you let us have your postal address, we can send some more information to you and also some stickers, etc.

Wishing you all the best.

From: Mahrouk

Thanks for your **BWC** magazine. It is very well brought out though somewhat depressing with all that animal violence. This is the first copy I have received other than the one you gave me when I joined.

Ban on Indian leather by US retailers

Thanks to the efforts of *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* (*PeTA*), India, leather originating in India is going to be struck off the import list of three major retailers in the US, because of the cruelty involved to the animals in the process. Gap Inc. the second largest clothing retailer in the United States is one of the stores that has reportedly agreed to stop buying and selling Indian leather. Others that have agreed are Banana Republic and Old Navy.

Indians and leather: shall I, shall I not?

Leather is a very controversial subject in India. Half-accepting, half-rejecting is the attitude of this country towards leather. One may not wear leather inside temples, but it is OK right outside it. *Rishi-munis* espousing the cause of *ahimsa* are portrayed sitting upon animal skins while meditating. People, uncomfortable in the knowledge that leather comes off a dead animal, are nevertheless unwilling to forsake the use of this material for the many advantages it is seen to offer. To assuage their consciences about there being nothing wrong in using it, they convince themselves that it comes from naturally dead animals, or that when it doesn't it is a waste product of the killed animal, it hasn't been killed *for* the skin: the non-vegetarians are to blame for that. Arguments proceed beyond that to the environmental disadvantages of petrochemical alternatives to leather (ignoring the pollution caused by the leather tanneries), about the unpresentable appearance of alternatives like canvas or corduroy, and the fact that the leather industry supports a large workforce, which would be displaced if one didn't use leather! **Beauty Without Cruelty** has always rejected leather as unethical to use, since it is a direct product of the slaughterhouse. Nothing, we feel, that comes from the killing of animals is fit to use if we believe in practising compassion towards our fellow creatures.

PeTA's campaign

An ongoing campaign by *PeTA*, India, against leather highlights the same issue. *PeTA* being an organisation with a vegan basis has naturally also always shunned leather. The basis of the campaign has been footage that *PeTA* has managed to obtain depicting the brutalities that cattle are subjected to by people. This footage shows in graphic detail what we mean when we claim that it is an acceptance of barbarism to wear leather. The film shows the manner in which cattle, after being traded in fairs (where they are also separated from their offspring), are walked for miles by their new owners (the brokers who sell them to butchers) to state borders across which they are smuggled through the connivance of authorities; and finally butchered by being slit ear to ear by a knife.

The barbarism that is cattle transport in India

The film shows the barbarism that is practiced in transporting the cattle: the yanking of tails until they bleed and break, people trampling upon exhausted cattle that lie fallen in trucks (Figure 1), brokers pulling upon the ropes that pass through the noses of the cows to drag them down trucks while unloading (Figure 2). Endless spectacles of the Human Barbarian. But perhaps the most moving and enraging sight in the whole footage is the scene of the brokers ***rubbing chilli powder and tobacco into***

Figure 1: If they are in your way, step upon them...

Figure 2: If they don't get down, drag them down...

the eyes of the cattle (Figure 3) to keep them alive and 'perked up,' so that they remain alive till their destination. It makes one's blood boil to see that our country allows this to happen.

PeTA has followed up their investigations in India with attention to the fate of all this leather produced here. India exports a lot of leather and *PeTA* reports that USA, UK, and Germany are the major buyers of our leather. If it is difficult to convince callous, hardened individuals to stop yanking at the tail of a cow to make her move, or to stop rubbing chilli into her eyes, or to not yank at the rope that passes through her nose to force her to get up when she repeatedly falls down, then there is another way: to stop the demand for the products of this barbarism. Nothing works like an economic incentive and ironically, commerce works where conscience doesn't even in India, a country from whom all of us had different hopes in the matter of ethical treatment of animals.

To curtail the demand generating all this barbarism in India, *PeTA* has publicised this issue in its home land, the USA, to make people aware of what their dollar does far away from the retailer's cash counter, and has also networked with some of the major clothing retailers in USA, convincing them to stop the import of articles made from Indian leather. This would hopefully percolate down to the suppliers and make them think it is not worth their time and money pouring chilli powder into the poor cow's eyes. While we wish *PeTA* all the success in their noble effort, it is tragic that this is the fate that India is reduced to: persisting with cruelty until economic pressure from abroad is brought to bear due to the commitment of individuals who understand *ahimsa* better than we do, in many ways.

A word of caution

Without condoning the barbarism perpetrated on these cattle in any way and while wishing *PeTA* well in their campaign (which should be our campaign as well) in India, it is hoped that India does not remain singled out in the anti-leather campaign, or that this appalling barbarism in the leather trade is not taken as representative of general treatment of cattle in India. The *Don't-buy-Indian-leather-because-cattle-are-treated-with-such-barbarism-in-India* message of the video would naturally invite the question (in the minds of people who still want to use leather): *so which country's leather should one use*? And if one were to look around, one would ask Which country's indeed? Certainly not the USA's, which comes from cattle raised as inanimate objects on those hells-on-earth called factory farms and feedlots, and killed on mechanised meat-packing plants. The cruelties depicted in *PeTA*'s video are easily matched by that of slaughterhouse workers in the USA (the reader is referred to the book *Slaughterhouse : The Shocking Story of Greed, Neglect, and Inhumane Treatment Inside the U.S. Meat Industry*[1] for details of sadism that frustrated employees at meat-packing plants of USA indulge in like deliberately mis-stunning an animal or frivolously poking at innocent animals with the

Figure 3: So that they don't collapse on the walk of hundreds of miles to the state that allows slaughter, rub some chilli peppers into their eyes...

electric cattle prod as they walk into the slaughter pen). The tail-yank is replaced by the high-tech electric cattle prod. So it is hoped that while *PeTA* uses this coverage strategically and succeeds in making as large a dent in the leather trade in India as possible, that it also takes care to not *a*) convey that what is shown in the video is what cattle treatment in India is *all about*, or *b*) that India is the biggest or the only villain in the leather trade.

What will it take to open our eyes to the condition of cattle?

PeTA's footage has done the job of the chilli powder in *our* eyes: it is up to us to react now. Maybe we need some equivalent of chilli powder to open our hearts now. Will we continue wearing leather like helpless and selfish members of a herd or act as strong individuals who dare to make the compassionate choice in the face of society's scorn?

For more information on *PeTA*'s campaign or to obtain a copy of their videotape, please write to

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
P.O. Box 28260, Juhu, Mumbai 400 049

Or call them at 6281880, 6281883 (fax), 98201-22602 (mobile).

PeTA is on the web, visit them at www.petaindia.com to know more about them. Be sure to congratulate them on their effort. Above all, be sure to

*STOP * WEARING * LEATHER.* ■

[1] Gail A. Eisnitz, *Slaughterhouse : The Shocking Story of Greed, Neglect, and Inhumane Treatment Inside the U.S. Meat Industry*, Prometheus Books, 1997

The 'most-members' winner!

We are happy to declare **Shobhana J. Punjani** of Pune to be the winner of our **BWC** *Ahinsa* trophy, that is awarded each year to the person making the most number of life members for us that year. Ms. Shobhana got twenty nine new life members into our family this preceding year (1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000). It is interesting to report that the next person lagged by only one! To all the new members that Ms. Shobhana made, we accord a warm welcome, and to Ms. Shobhana herself goes our gratitude for spreading the word among so many new people. ■

HELP YOURSELVES...

...to our stock of old issues of **COMPASSIONATE FRIEND**. We have many copies of almost every issue of our magazine from the time it was first published in 1974. We now wish to dispose of them, so invite you to possess a set of the magazines for your personal collection or to send it as a gift to someone: it would cost you only the mailing charges. So please write to us expressing your interest in obtaining a set. We can make approximately 25 near-complete sets of our old issues, hence the first 25 letters we get would be the proud owners of a vintage collection (1974 - 2000) of India's leading animal rights publication, and will be informed of the mailing charges to send us.

VEG-NONVEG LABELING AT LAST!

The *Financial Express* of 26 May 2000 carries the following piece of news in a small corner of its inside pages:

Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules amended

Ashok B Sharma
New Delhi, May 25

THE government after consultations with the the Central Committee for Food Standards has amended the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules.

The amended rules provide that whenever any article of food contains whole or part of any animal or bird materials, including water or marine animals or eggs as an ingredient, a declaration to this effect shall be made by a symbol on labels of the product. Colour code so stipulated for this purpose should also be indicated to suggest that it is a non-vegetarian food. The symbol shall consist of a circle with a single chord passing through its centre from top left hand side to the right diagonally.

The symbol should be displayed in prominent red colour on the package having contrast background and shall have width of circumference equal to the width of the letters used in the name or brand name of the product and diametre equal to the height of the letters used for the name or brand name of the product. The symbol should be displayed just above the name or brand name of the product and approximately to its centre and shall form an integral part of the name or the brand name of any article of non-vegetarian food. This should be displayed wherever the name of the product or its brand name are displayed including labels, containers as well as in pamphlets, leaflets and advertisement in any media. ◆

The import of this piece of news for us at **BWC** is very high, needless to say. To *Financial Express* it might be worth only an inside-page mention, but to us it is important enough to be splashed across the cover. It must be mentioned that **Beauty Without Cruelty** had made a representation for this very cause to the Health Ministry as far back as 1978. It is nice to see our desire realised after so many years. What the notification means is that from now, consumers would be able to tell from looking at the product whether it is vegetarian or not. But what brand of vegetarianism? The official notification on the matter, released by the Gazette of India, reveals to our delight that the rules would cover all ingredients animal products traditionally considered non-vegetarian by Indians, that is, all flesh and eggs. It does not extend to milk, as is to be expected considering the status that milk enjoys in our culture. So, notwithstanding the increasing exposure that people are getting to the negative effects of drinking milk, lacto-vegetarianism (the term for vegetarianism that allows the consumption of milk: the prevalent practice in India) now becomes the official defining standard as far as labeling of products is concerned. Vegans, wait a while longer for vegetarian bread to mean milkless bread, and for honey to find a place also! Right now, a good start is for 'vegetarian cake' to automatically mean eggless cakes.

It is a great victory for consumers to be able to know whether what is put into what they buy contains any animal parts or not. It remains to be seen when the government passes a law requiring mention of every ingredient put into a consumer product, so that the consumer can know for himself whether to buy the item or not, based on criteria of his choice. The present amendment definitely addresses the criteria of vegetarianism.

We reproduce opposite the relevant English portions (separated by red ellipses ...) from the notification of the matter published in *The Gazette of India*:

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India
EXTRAORDINARY
PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (i)
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY
No. 277] NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2000/VAISAKHA 27, 1922

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(Department of Health)
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 17th May, 2000

* * *

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 23 of the said Act, the Central Government, after consultation with the Central Committee for Food Standards, hereby makes the following rules further to amend the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955, namely:-

* * *

2. In the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955, in rule 32,

(i) in clause (b), after the second proviso, the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:-

"Provided further that whenever any article of food contains whole or part of any animal including birds and fresh water or marine animals or eggs as an ingredient, a declaration to this effect shall be made by a symbol and colour code so stipulated for this purpose to indicate that the product is Non-Vegetarian Food. The symbol shall consist of a circle with a single chord passing through its centre from top left hand side to the right diagonally as indicated below:-

The symbol shall be displayed in prominent red colour on the package having contrast background and shall have width of circumference equal to the width of the letters used in the name or brand name of the product and diameter equal to the height of the letters used for the name or brand name of the product. The symbol shall be displayed just above the name or brand name of the product and approximately to its centre and shall form an integral part of the name or brand name of any article of Non-Vegetarian Food, to be indicated wherever the name or brand name shall be displayed, including labels, containers as well as in pamphlets, leaflets, advertisements in any media, etc.

The symbol and colour code used to indicate nature of the food as Non-Vegetarian, shall be published/displayed extensively by the manufacturers, or packers or sellers, so as to reach the entire population irrespective of their literacy status."

(ii) after Explanation VIII, the following Explanation shall be inserted, namely :-

"Explanation–IX - 'Non-Vegetarian Food' means an article of food which contains whole or part of any animal including birds, fresh water or marine animals or eggs as an ingredient."

[No. P-15014/12/99-PH (Food)]

DEEPAK GUPTA, Jt. Secy.

Grin and 'Bear' It

No Patronising Foreign Tourists, No Performing Bears!

Perhaps the largest number of complaints received by **Beauty Without Cruelty** on a single issue concerning animals have been on the topic of "dancing bears." The complaints have come mainly from foreign tourists who have visited India and felt so strongly against this form of entertainment that not only have they taken the trouble to locate **BWC**'s address, but many have written to the Indian Embassies in their countries who in turn have given them our address! About ten years ago India banned performing bears (among other animals)—on paper. As we see it, the problem for the Government has been to rehabilitate them. They have not all been confiscated yet, so they continue to be seen on our streets and highways: ironically, thanks in large part to the foreigners who pay them to perform. Indians are also not to be left behind in the 'fun' of watching *bhaalu ka naatch*, but we feel—without exonerating the Indians—that the money power of overseas tourists is the stronger incentive for the trade to flourish.

The *Captive Animal Protection Society (UK)* and **Beauty Without Cruelty** (India) have therefore decided to join together in a crusade to educate people about the unseen cruelty that precedes and accompanies the 'dancing bears' dragged from city to city in the hot sun. The leaflet forming the back cover of this issue of *Compassionate Friend* carries the message we want to convey. Our plan is to print and distribute thousands of such leaflets to tourists—focusing mostly on foreigners—that flock the popular locations in northern India, where the phenomenon of dancing bears is more to be seen. People from overseas would also be addressed in their own countries through travel literature, travel companies, tour organizers, *etc.* The hope is that once people get to know of the cruelty involved and how they, as patronising tourists, are indirectly encouraging the occupation, they will no longer stop to watch or give any money to the *madaris*. While rehabilitation remains a problem, it is surely in our hands to discourage the supply by curtailing the demand.

We request readers to tear out the back cover and hand it over to friends visiting India and even those staying here who you might know to be fond of watching performing animal shows. If you wish to distribute more please do write us and we will be happy to send you a bunch. ■

What You Can Do

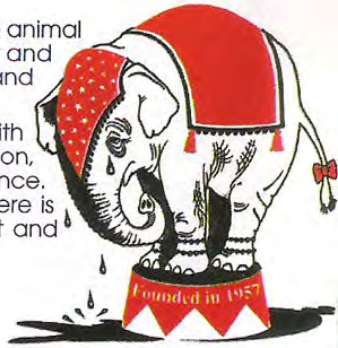
We need volunteers in Delhi for the distribution of these leaflets. We are going to print fifty thousand of them and these have to be distributed on the streets of Delhi and other places where bear performances with foreigners flocked to watch are seen. Other sites for distribution could be outside big hotels, outside the airport, outside tourism offices, *etc*. If you know of places where *bhaalu ka naatch* is held on a frequent basis (a playground, say) then please let us know. Remember, this campaign is primarily about bears so that has to be our focus. If you feel you would like to participate in this effort, ***please contact us***. We can utilise your skills and compensate you for your time also. We know that if you do it, we can be assured of dedication and zeal. So come forward to help us out, and be part of **Beauty Without Cruelty**'s campaign.

About CAPS: (reproduced from their website)

The ***Captive Animals' Protection Society (CAPS)*** was established in 1957. Founder Irene Heaton was appalled by the suffering of animals within the entertainment industry, and campaigned tirelessly on their behalf throughout the rest of her life. It is through her efforts and the influence and hard work of her successors, that *CAPS* can be recognised today as one of UK's leading campaigning organisations on behalf of animals in circuses, zoos, and the entertainment industry.

Aims: *CAPS* is opposed to the use of performing animals in circuses and wishes to see animal circuses outlawed. *CAPS* seeks to prevent the use and exploitation of captive and performing animals, and investigates cases of alleged cruelty against captive and performing animals.

Projects: Over the past 40 years, *CAPS* has helped individuals and organisations with their own projects, both in the UK and abroad, by supplying them with information, photographs, video footage and other forms of support, including financial assistance. *CAPS* hope that animals have benefited from its efforts and, in Britain at lzeast, there is evidence that captive animals are being accorded a greater degree of respect and understanding than was the case in the past.



The Captive Animals Protection Society, PO Box 43, Dudley DY3 2YP, England
Phone/fax: (01384) 456682 Email: diane@caps-uk.dircon.co.uk
Website: www.caps-uk.dircon.co.uk

Poor response for volunteers ☹

Our notice for volunteers (in Pune and Bombay) drew almost a negligible response. Please understand that your time and effort are what are very important to us and are what we seek. The more you donate those to us the more we can give you back in terms of breadth of genuine, updated, reliable, quality information. When we run short of hands and heads, we have no choice but to give up on some of our hot ideas, because we cannot afford the services of paid professionals. But if you came forward, what a difference it would make! And you could also get the satisfaction of knowing you contributed. So do come forward and help us out: we would like to grow with the help of our volunteers.

From the desk of our Research Officer...

We thought we would keep you up to date on the research we are doing, by sharing with you facts that we uncovered, products we cleared, companies we corresponded with, *etc.*, in the course of our market research over the last three months.

1 Solid evidence against Liquid Soap...

In our correspondence with a soap manufacturer, we detected a seemingly deliberate attempt at evasion on their part to answering parts of our questionnaire (which we send out to manufacturers to verify the source of the ingredients of their products) for their Liquid Soap line of products. Thinking that the errors of omission must have been through oversight, we nevertheless decided to research for ourselves what those ingredients were. What we uncovered took us by surprise and made us resolve never to overlook the slightest attempt at such evasion. The three ingredients that we asked them to indicate whether they were present or not were Arachidonic Acid, Amylase, and Quaternium. Not names that seem to have any obvious problems about them. We were in for a surprise. Here is what the Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary reveals (note italicized portion in red about source of these items):

Arachidonic Acid

(5,8,11,14-eicosatetraenoic acid)

$CH_3(CH_2)_4(CH{:}CHCH_2)_4(CH_2)_2COOH$

Properties: A C_{20} unsaturated, essential combustible fatty acid.

Uses: 1) Biochemical Research
2) Source of prostaglandins and other pharmacologically active compounds.
3) A surfactant and an emulsifying agent.
4) It is used essentially for nutrients and to soothe eczema and rashes in skin, creams, and lotions. (No known toxicity to humans.)

Source: Occurs in the liver, brain, glands and fat of animals and humans. ***The acid is generally isolated from animal liver.***

Amylase

A class of enzymes which convert starch into sugars.

Uses: 1) It is used as a texturizer in cosmetics.
2) It is used in dry-cleaning and also in conversion of starch to glucose in syrups (corn syrups).
3) Used medicinally to combat inflammation.

Source/Origin: ***It is an enzyme prepared from Hog/Pig pancreas.***

Quaternium

Uses: It is used in various cosmetics- foundations, powders, concealers, bronzers, makeup removers, blushes, eye shadows, eyeliners, eyebrow makeup, and mascaras. It also is found in sunscreens, moisturizers, cleansers, creams, lotions, shampoos, soaps, and other skin care products.

Source: ***Derived from animal tallow (i.e. melted and clarified animal fat).***

The manufacturer subsequently replied, on our repeated probing, that their soap does not contain any of these, but the attempt at evading the question and then to cause delay in replying speaks for itself. So the next time you buy soap, remember that "Free from animal fat" doesn't clear the soap; there are other ingredients in there that are not listed on the package that might be derived from animal sources.

2 Learn about Lac

The Times of India of 21 May 2000 reported that in the International Science and Engineering Fair—an event often described as the Olympics of educational science—held in Detroit, USA, recently, an Indian duo, Sarvesh Rathore and Sameep Agarwal, from Christ Church School, Jabalpur, had bagged the second prize. Their project attempted to use the waste-products of the shellac industry as a tonic for plants. Lac, which is a resinous substance deposited by a tiny insect on the branches of trees, is crushed and mixed with hot water into which the impurities dissolve. The solid part is used to make shellac, while the red water is usually dumped into neighboring fields. The project involved using this lac dye as a

vehicle for carrying micronutrients to plants thereby increasing their yield. This lac dye is to replace synthetic products that are used to overcome the micronutrient deficiencies.

BWC congratulates Sarvesh and Sameep for their performance in the competition, and for their desire to apply their minds to the benefit of agricultural productivity. We simultaneously wish to use this opportunity to educate people about the subject of their research: lac. Lac being an animal-derived substance naturally evokes questions regarding the ethics of its production. How is it obtained? Is any creature put to pain for it? Killed for it? Made to suffer in any way for it? Learn about it in this write-up on Lac compiled from publications of the Shellac Export Promotion Council, Calcutta:

Lac is the resinous secretion of a species of insect, *Laccifer lacca*, generally known as the Lac insect. The lac insect is a small insect, red in colour, almost microscopic in size, spending the whole of its natural life attached to the twigs of certain trees. It obtains food by inserting its proboscis through the bark of the newly grown wood and drawing forth the sap. During this period, the insect secretes the resin Lac which covers the whole of its body and acts as a protection against outside influence. As the insects are crowded together on twigs, the individual cells coalesce to become one mass of encrusted lac. In this form the lac is known as **sticklac** (see picture below). The sticklac is first crushed and screened to remove the large sticks and open the lac cells so that lac dye and the remains of the dead lac insects can be washed away with water. After drying the lac granules and further mechanically cleaning it by sieving and winnowing, the commercial product **seedlac** is produced which contains 3–7% of foreign matter. Seedlac varies in appearance and in colour (from a pale amber to a deep red) depending on the type of tree from which the sticklac has been harvested. The remaining impurities are removed by one of several processes to produce the **shellac** of commerce.

The various uses of lac are:

Food Industry: Coating of fruits and preservation of fruits like mangoes, bananas, chocolates, lozenges, coffee beans, aluminium foils, non-toxic ink of marking food stuff and internal can coating.

Leather Industry: Adhering coating of leather with metallic and plastic foils, top-dressing material.

Electrical Industry: It is used in air-drying and baking-type insulating varnish, coating of isolators, cement for sockets of electrical lamps, coating of spark plugs.

Lac Dye: Dyeing of wool and silk, in soft drink formulations, pill coating, finished food coating and in confectionary and chocolate coating.

Cosmetic Industry: It is used in hair spray, lacquer, eye shadows, microencapsulated perfumes, lipstick, nail polish and mascara.

Varnish and Printing ink Industry: It is used in furniture polish, floor polish, sealers, pattern paints for wood, flexible and fast drying agent for printing ink, heat and water proof varnish (melfolac).

Picture Courtesy: Shellac Export Promotion Council

Adhesive Industry: Gasket and optical cement are prepared from shellac, it is used as sealing wax, shellac-bonded wheels are also used for fine-finishing stainless steel strip and precious meta strip, used as polymer, hot-melt adhesive.

Pharmaceutical Industry: Shellac is also used for coating of tablets, micro-encapsulation of vitamins and coating of medicines for delayed action.

Miscellaneous Uses: Lac wax is used in shoe, automobile and floor polishes, lac wax is used for bottle sealer, tailor's chalk, crayons, lipstick, fruit coating. Shellac varnish is coated on playing cards to give them a glossy silky finish. Lac has much use in jewellery. Shellac is used in the preparation of flexographic inks.

3 Gel from Hell

In our perpetual quest to stay up to date with what is reported in the news media that has anything even remotely to do with animals, we recently came across an article in the *Pune Newsline*, a supplement of the *Indian Express*: that reported that the "National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), Pune has come up with a gel that fights scars and heal wounds with minimal scarring. The gel is a combination of a synthetic polymer, Polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP), and Chitosan which is an animal derivative." So if you are in the weird habit of applying sticky substances from unknown sources to your hair simply to prevent it from getting ruffled by the wind, this piece of information should hopefully cause you to instantly terminate the habit. Chitosan is made from a substance called Chitin. Innocuous sounding as the name is (and as all chemical names are), here is what the *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* tells us about Chitosan and Chitin:

Chitosan (Deacylated derivative of chitin)

It is used as a dyeing assistant and in photographic emulsions. Chitosan can be easily absorbed by the human body so it is often used in wound dressings and promotes healing.

Chitin (Glucosamine Polysaccharide) $(C_8H_{13}NO_5)_n$

Properties: White powder similar in structure to cellulose, insoluble in common solvents, soluble in concentrated HCl, H_2SO_4, and HNO_3.

Uses:
1) Biological Research
2) It is used in wound healing emulsions.
3) In tanning products.
4) It is also used in conditioners, skin care products, and shampoos.

Source/Origin: ***It is the principal constituent of the shells of crabs, lobsters, and beetles*** *i.e.*, the organic base of their hard parts. It is also found in some fungi, yeast and algae.

Gel

Gel is a combination of synthetic polymer and a substance found commonly in insects and shells of crustaceans like prawns and crabs. Usually gel is a combination of Chitosan and Polyvinyl-pyrrolidone (PVP).

You can be sure the manufacturers of commercial gel do not take the trouble of making it out of chitin obtained from 'some' fungi, algae, or yeast but instead go to the nearest prawn or lobster farm or restaurant and help themselves to the shells that remain after the fleshy parts have been eaten by some species of humans: the non-vegetarians.

4 Some more GROSS facts...

... about leather, uncovered in the context of articles that followed the campaign by *PeTA* against Indian leather:

Patent Leather

Leather finished to a hard and glossy surface.

Suede

Leather with a soft napped surface usually produced by rubbing the flesh side of the animal.

5 Product research report

Between February and August 2000, we sent our Product Research Questionnaires to hundred and forty two companies (52 food companies, 74 cosmetics, 7 attire, 3 pizza joints and 6 miscellaneous, *i.e.*, office and household products) including twelve which proclaim their products to be 'Pure vegetarian' or '100% vegetarian.' Out of these hundred and eight *only fifteen have bothered to reply*. Those who haven't include some of the self-proclaimed '100% vegetarian' companies, who one would think would have nothing to hide. Apparently they do. Out of the twelve '100% vegetarian' companies, only four have replied to our correspondence: Vadilal Industries (ice-creams), Indo Nissin Foods (Top Ramen Smoodles—Macho Masala and Oye Tomato), International Best Foods (Knorr Tomato Soup and Tarla Dalal products), and Modi Sugar Mills (Modi Sugar). *We are still processing their questionnaires, so please do not take this as a certification of their product yet.* Self-proclaimed 100% vegetarian producers who have not replied to us yet are Dinshaw's Dairy Foods Ltd. (Ice-cream), Muraka Clearing Agents (Clean Comb lotion), Supreme Foods (Bread), Kanmoor Foods Ltd. (Sil Beanbang), Ruchi Soya Ind. Ltd. (Soya chunks & granules), Dabon International Ltd. (Le Bon cheese), and Ms. Anjali Mukherjee (Garlic Sticks).

Other companies who have replied to our queries are Fem Care Pharma (Botanica dispenser soap) and Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (Amul Masti Dahi and Amul Taaza Milk). ■

The Gir lion census: animal sacrifice with a difference

Every five years, the turn comes around to count the number of lions in the Gir forest in Gujarat: the last home to the Asiatic lion (see map alongside). The Forest Department of Gujarat is the agency that handles the task. There would seem nothing otherwise controversial about the task they take on, indeed it seems a noble one because the goal is to ensure the continued survival of the species. It is however, not the goal but the means adopted for achieving the goal that raises the eyebrows of many people, including ours at **BWC**. The means were the subject of the headlines of the newspapers on 26 April: *200 calves will pay with lives to help conduct lion census*. Enough to catch one's attention.

Knowing from previous experience how unreliable newspaper reports can be, we decided to check directly with the government authorities themselves. In a letter addressed to the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Gujarat, we wrote (relevant excerpts only):

BWC's message to the CM of Gujarat

26th April 2000

Dear Sir,

Today's Times of India has an article entitled "200 calves will pay with lives to help conduct lion census".

On behalf of **Beauty Without Cruelty**, an animal rights organisation, I wish to urgently draw your attention to the fact that the use of live bait is illegal under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. Please therefore take immediate necessary steps so that the Gujarat State Forest Department not to utilise male buffalo calves or any other animals for the purpose of conducting the lion census in and around Gir National Park as planned from 17th to 23rd May 2000.

We would appreciate a prompt assurance from you by return e-mail that live bait will not be used for this or any other purposes.

Chairperson

Beauty Without Cruelty

To this, a response was received from the Chief Minister's office to the effect that our concerns were unfounded and that the officials of the State Forest Department would get back to us on the matter. The latter did not happen before repeated reminders from us. Eventually we managed to contact the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), G. A. Patel, on his mobile phone and asked him what the status of the matter was: whether or not live calves were to be used as bait for attracting the lions. He said that he could not make any comment as the matter was *sub judice* and that the Forest Department was awaiting the decision of the High Court in the matter before proceeding further. He could not give any more information than that and flatly refused our request of taking one of our members along as observer for the counting to ensure that the word was kept. The census was a very skilled affair, he said, and no outsiders were going to be allowed to disturb the work. He also sent us the following communication by fax on 17 May 2000:

Message from the Chief Conservator of Forests, Gujarat, to BWC

2/5/2000

Dear Madam,

The wildlife census including population estimation of the Asiatic Lion in the Gir Sanctuary and National park is a periodical event taking place once in five years. Since Asiatic Lion is one of the most endangered species (only about 300 compared to about 3000 tigers in India) their population monitoring with realistic data

is essential for scientific management and conservation. The population estimation technique for the Asiatic Lion, so far adopted is to make their prides stationary at only one location, for facilitating actual count. Compare to indirect methods such as pugmarks count, number of kills observed, foot or vehicle transact, *etc.*, the actual direct count method is more reliable. The domestic prey animals are shown only to make lions stationary at one location to facilitate such direct count and they are withdrawn as soon as work is over. You would appreciate that the Asiatic Lions are carnivores and they feed only on domestic or wild animals, and can be localized for some time only by showing such prey animals. The taking of census is not at all an entertainment activity, it is part of scientific management of wildlife in protected areas. Therefore, such method is not violating the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Kindly appreciate this scientific viewpoint and support the 10th wildlife census in Gir to be carried out during Mid-May, 2000.

G. A. Patel

Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Gujarat State, Gandhinagar

Distressed by this open contradiction between what the Chief Minister's office was saying and what the Forest Department was saying, we decided to send a team of our members to Gandhinagar to investigate the matter in person. Two new and very enthusiastic members from Baroda, Jankhana Raval and Suneeta Verma, readily agreed to carry out the assignment of finding out the facts of the matter and to lodge our protest in person. They were sent to Gandhinagar to gather information from the Forest Department and if necessary, to proceed to the census sites to observe and monitor the counting, if they were allowed. Here we reproduce the report submitted by them:

As reported by the BWC team of investigators from Gandhinagar:

At the Forest Department office in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, we were asked to meet M. M. Sharma, Deputy Conservator of Forests. Shri Sharma received us very cordially, displaying familiarity with the name of **Beauty Without Cruelty** (on account of our organisation's correspondence with them over email and phone the preceding few days), but also visibly restraining his disapproval of our protest to their methods. He very graciously spent time with us—a good hour and a half—explaining the various methods of conducting a lion census, such as the pug mark method, the water hole method, the colour method, and the live bait method, along with the limitations of each. We were explained that the first two methods were used in the lion census to get approximate numbers and the live bait method used later to get a final count.

He justified the use of live bait by the Forest Department on the grounds that they were going to use "only" male buffalo calves which are "uneconomical" and "useless," which even otherwise *are not allowed to survive* (Veganism opponent, please note: why is this male calf so expendable? Are you drinking its milk?—*Editor*). He said that if they were not used as bait, then their lives would be extended for just two more days! He also stated that as per the law, using live bait is illegal for entertainment purposes, but for purposes like the census, it is of vital need as approximate figures may affect their planning for the future. He also advised us to direct our compassion in a proper manner, so as to help the census when only three hundred lions are left and asked us to choose whether 300 lions—an endangered species—or 200 male buffalo calves were more important to save. He also sarcastically challenged us to similarly crusade for the cause of useless cattle left in the jungle by the *maaldhaaris*—a buffalo-herding pastoral community inhabiting the Gir forest—to become prey for lions. Finally, he invited us to the hearing of the case on the 23rd May at the High Court.

To gather information beyond what was available from the Government offices, we went to the office of *The Times of India*, Ahmedabad, and met Bharat Desai who was handling the matter of the lion census in the press. We learnt from him that the case was filed by individuals of Viniyog Parivaar, Mumbai. Another individual at the Times office also alleged that the Forest

What is wrong in using live bait?

A question that is likely to get asked by 'conservationists.' The answer comes easy to those who value every individual life, and whose interest is in ensuring that not a single creature comes to harm. It comes with more difficulty to one who is concerned only with a collective statistic for a group of individuals, but not with the condition of any one individual in the group.

Using live (animal) bait is to do with inflicting terror and causing murder. Mental torture *and* physical harm. To appreciate the former (*i.e.*, mental torture), picture yourself in the animal's situation: tied to a tree and watching your death—the lion—approach. The terror that must engulf your mind as you realise that you are moments from your end at the hands of your natural adversary from whom every natural instinct that you are born with teaches you to flee or fight. Your heart stopping at the sight of your nemesis, your legs going limp at the knowledge of what is to follow and your helplessness to avoid it. Your body going through the physical efforts of thrashing and kicking around, trying to free itself of the rope by which you are tied, as the distance between the lion and you decreases and the last moments of your life arrive before the murderous assault of your predator upon you and the subsequent blood-bath.

So much for terror. There is then the crime of causing murder. To arrange for the death of a living creature is to kill it ourselves. Who are we to put another creature to death? Can we return its life to it once the census is over? If it is so important to us to count the lions we must be ready to give up our lives instead of acting like cowards and putting the calves forward.

Department did not employ wildlife experts for conducting the census, citing the name of one expert who had helped conduct a previous census using the "whiskers method" (no elaboration received on that—*Editor*) and arrived at the estimate of 210–215 adult lions in Gir. He also claimed that while NGOs are used on the field for data collection, they are not involved in analyzing the data. It also emerged that the Forest Department had written a letter to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun, on 5th May for help and expertise in conducting the census, but were turned down by the latter due to the short notice. During our conversation with Bharat Desai, he called up Sunaina Tomar, Collector of Junagadh and also an opponent of using live bait, to know more about the census, and learnt from her that the census was cancelled due to heavy rains in the forest. To cross-check this piece of news, we also called up H. S. Singh of the Gir Foundation and received the same information.

Upon calling up M. M. Sharma to find out about the final hearing date, we were told that the case had been withdrawn by the protesting party, Viniyog Parivaar, as the census had been cancelled for this year due to untimely rains. It is learnt that the government has decided to postpone the census to next year.

That brought to a temporary end the current unfortunate confrontation between animal rights groups and the Forest Department. **Beauty Without Cruelty** wishes to commend Viniyog Parivaar for taking the lead in protesting against the use of live bait in conducting the census. The vigilance shown by all parties paid off in averting the sacrifice of innocent animals.

Some questions, some suggestions

We intend to find out what is the increase in accuracy that the use of live bait buys us. Not that any increase in accuracy can justify the terror the bait is subjected to. Even for the imaginary sake of locating the last remaining lion on earth, we have no right to force a calf to give up its life. So for mere increase in accuracy...? But for academic purposes, it would be interesting to know to what end were the cattle to be sacrificed. How was the increased accuracy to be used? Hopefully, in resource allocation for future planning for

Continued on page 17...

About the Asiatic Lion[1]

Common name: Asiatic Lion

Scientific name: *Panthera leo persica*

Order: Carnivora

Family: Felidae

Status: IUCN: Endangered

CITES: Appendix I

Indian Wildlife Protection Act (1972): Schedule 1 (the highest level of protection)

Habitat: In the past, Asiatic lions inhabited habitats ranging from moist deciduous forests to hot deserts. The Gir forest is a dry deciduous forest with grasslands, thorn forest and riverine forest; the latter is critical habitat during the dry season.

Distribution: The last surviving free-ranging population of Asiatic lions is basically restricted to the 1,412 km^2 of Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in the Saurashtra Peninsula of the state of Gujarat in western India. Groups of lions have dispersed and settled in at least two forested areas, the Girnar hills and the coastal plantations, each with less than 20 animals; neither satellite population is self-sustaining over the long-term.

Description: The body colour of adult lions varies from pale yellow to white on the underside, to light tan to dark brown above and on the flanks. Adult males have a mane, which vary in colour from black to golden yellow. Dark spots that cover the bodies of cubs gradually fade and disappear by the age of 3 years. The tails in the adults end in a tuft of black hair. Adult males weigh 160–190 kg while adult females weigh 100–120 kg, smaller, on the average, than the African lion. There are other anatomical features that differentiate the two sub-species: a belly fold in the Asiatic lion, rarely found in the African lions, a less luxuriant mane in the male Asiatic lion, and minor differences in skull structure.

Ecology: The Gir lion is a forest dwelling population (contrary to the normal association of lions with open habitats), and preys on deer (the only lion population to do so). In the 1970s, livestock (75%) and wild prey (25%) comprised the key constituents of the diet, proportions that had reversed by the late 1980s. This dramatic shift in predation ecology is due to the increase in the population of wild ungulates, especially chital (*Axis axis*), a consequence of reduced livestock grazing within the protected area. Chital is the most commonly eaten prey, while sambar (*Cervus unicolor*) the most preferred prey species. The Gir's wild ungulate population is now estimated at over 40,000 animals. Annual home ranges of adult males range from 100–140 km^2, while those of females 40–70 km^2

Behaviour: A group of related lionesses and their offspring form the core of a pride to which is attached a group of males. These male coalitions hold territories for as long as five years. Unlike in Africa, it is rare in Gir to see adults of both sexes together unless they are mating or sharing a large kill, such as sambar or domestic buffalo. The presence of dense stalking cover may enable males to hunt more successfully in the Gir forest

[1] Ravi Chellam and Vasant K. Saberwal, *Asiatic Lion*, in: Endangered Animals: A Reference Guide to Conflicting Issues, 2000 (in press), R. P. Reading and B. J. Miller (editors), Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, USA

than in the open African savannah. With the medium-sized chital (adult body weight *ca.* 50 kg) being the most common prey for females, it is a good strategy for males to be nutritionally independent of females, thereby allowing the rest of the pride adequate access to the kill.

Life history: Lions mate throughout the year. A birth peak occurs from February to April. Litter size ranges from 1 to 5. Lionesses start breeding when 3 years old, while males need to obtain a territory, at approximately five years, before breeding successfully. Adult sex ratio is 1 male: 2.2 females.

Political History: The range of the Asiatic lion has shrunk dramatically over the past two centuries for reasons stated above. That the species survives today is largely due to the efforts of the Nawab (ruler) of Junagadh. In the early twentieth century, he declared the Gir Forest, his hunting preserve, an area within which the lion would receive full state protection. At the time, the lion population is reported to have dipped to 12–20 animals, recovering to the current 300 odd animals in the Gir National Park and Sanctuary.

The recovery of the sub-species is remarkable, particularly given the high incidence of human dependence on natural resources in and around Gir. The Asiatic lion remains a highly endangered species. The Asiatic lion is almost entirely confined today to the approximately 1,500 km^2 of the Gir protected area.

...Continued from page 15

conservation? Then why not factor the inaccuracy into the conservation efforts, overplan, and be safe? Meaning that if the census yields a count of 200, assume that a certain fraction—say ten percent—of these were counted twice and use the lower figure of 180 as the final count. Step up the conservation efforts accordingly and be safe. Undercounting would be safe from a conservation viewpoint, since we would actually have a larger population than expected.

We grant that the purpose of using live bait in this case was indeed not entertainment, and *we commend the Forest Department officials for also recognising this,* but we once again want to make the point that putting another creature to death *is not the right way of doing things*.

And the arguments given by the Forest department? The animal is going to die sooner or later "anyway," that we should focus our attention on the predator more than the prey. Would we do that with a mentally retarded child or with a terminally ill patient, who are going to die "anyway?" Everybody is going to ultimately die anyway. Does that exonerate a person from the crime of being the cause of someone's death, of hastening the time of their death?

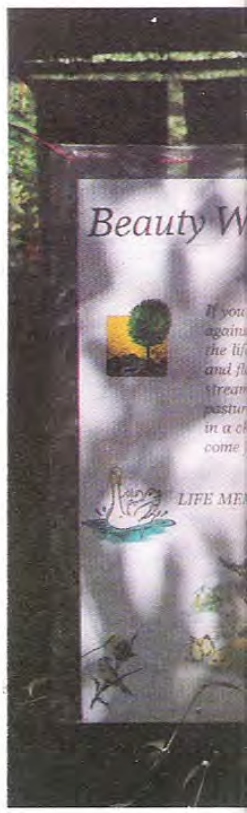
We conclude this report by making the following points:

- We appreciate that the lion is a highly endangered species and that its census is an important event. Few countries would be privileged to be home to such a magnificent animal. We too hope that the lion population not only survives but flourishes.
- We do *not* wish or intend to become obstacles in the work of the Forest Department. That the work of conservation of the lion is something they attach so much personal importance to and take with so much seriousness comes as a welcome surprise to us and we commend them for it.
- Our only contention in the whole matter is that the goal of counting the lions need not be achieved by sacrificing any animals' lives, least of all by the method of forcing defenseless animals to face their sure death. Even if their claim that achieving higher accuracy in counting is achievable only through use of live bait were true, we would not feel that increased accuracy to be worth putting 200 innocent calves through the terror of watching their death coming at them.
- **Beauty Without Cruelty** is willing to offer to the Forest Department the services of its volunteers in the conduct of such operations if such services of humans will mean that no innocent life will be put to harm, which otherwise would have been.
- We congratulate the administrative efficiency of the office of the Chief Minister of Gujarat. All email messages sent by us to them were replied the *very same day*! ■

Showing the

Geeta Jaikumar Director, **Beaut**

The **BWC** Chennai Centre held a poster exhibition from 26–31 December, 1999, during the International Convention of the Theosophical Society. The exhibition was inaugurated by Radha Burnier, the International President of the Theosophical Society. **BWC** member-volunteers Shwetha Purushottam, Kavitha Purushottam, and Preethi Muthaiah put in a lot of hard work and brought forth their creative and artistic talents to make the posters which covered a wide range of thought-provoking ethical issues.



The topics covered included vegetarianism, vivisection and experimentation on lab animals, dissection in schools, biotechnology involving animal gene manipulation, entertainment using animals, the horrors of the slaughter house, and animal sacrifices. There were also posters highlighting articles of common use containing animal ingredients, the cruelties perpetrated in the harvesting of fur and leather, the story of the silk moth, poaching of the tiger for its body parts ('supposedly' for its medicinal and therapeutic properties) and the near total extinction of the Chiru, a Tibetan antelope for its soft fur which is highly prized in making Shahtoosh shawls.

The exhibition, besides creating an awareness about the pointless cruelty animals are subjected to, also attempted to show that cruelty-free alternatives are available, if only one were to look for them. A poster titled

n at Chennai...

Without Cruelty—Chennai Centre

'Progress without Pain' highlighted the alternatives to laboratory animal experimentation while yet another poster listed products of daily use which were cruelty free. At the **BWC** Chennai Centre we believe that the message of compassion to all sentient beings can also be conveyed in subtle ways. Hence two big posters featuring comic strips with the title *Lighter side?* were also displayed.

We were very happy with the feedback that we got from the people who visited the stall. Many of them returned with writing materials and took down notes! We also managed to enroll over 20 life members at the exhibition.

In the coming year, we are planning to carry the message of **Beauty Without Cruelty** and compassion to all living beings to as many educational institutions as possible. We appeal to all those who can spare the time or the resources to get in touch with us, so that together we can help to kindle the flame of compassion in as many people as possible, so as to enable us to live in peace and harmony with our fellow creatures on this planet.

I conclude with an extract from the speech of Chief Seattle:

> ... The Earth does not belong to man—man belongs to the Earth.
>
> All things are connected like the blood which unites one family...
>
> Man did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it.
>
> Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. ■

Wildlife trafficking via Mumbai?

It gives us pleasure to report here that the active participation of one of our members, Dharmesh Solanki, who is also an Animal Welfare Officer, resulted recently in the seizure of a leopard skin from one of the most crowded suburbs of Mumbai. The news, which was all over the newspapers for many days (Figure 1), took everyone by surprise. Mumbai has never been associated with wildlife crime and does not have the reputation of being a conduit for trade in wildlife items. To find leopard skins put in plastic bags and dumped in public garbage bins comes as a shock to the average Mumbai-kar who unfortunately cannot stay as far away from garbage as s/he wants. We hope that this is a stray incident and not the tip of an iceberg, as far as Mumbai is concerned. It has enough other problems that wildlife trafficking not be added to the list. ■

REPORT

On 29th March 2000, my brother's mother-in-law while coming to our house from Nagpada, in the morning at around 8.00am saw a big blue plastic bag near the junction of Nagpada and J.J. Hospital in a garbage bin from which a portion of the skin with hair was sticking out. She suspected that the bag must be having the skin of an animal and as a concerned citizen of India, she felt that it was her duty to check, hence without hesitation she opened the bag. To her surprise she saw that it was a skin of a leopard.

Knowing my involvement in animal welfare activities, she handed over the skin to me. After a telephonic discussion with the Wild Life Department authorities (Thane), I took the skin to their office. The officers, after thorough inspection, confirmed that the skin was that of a freshly killed leopard. The skin had two bullet marks, one near the shoulder and the other near the neck. The marks indicated that it was short probably by an country made pistol. The skin was then sealed and the paper formalities completed.

The finding of the skin of a freshly killed leopard indicates that inspite of strict laws, poaching of such innocent animal is still going on, proving the Government's failure in protecting our wild life. Should this continue, what future do we and our children have? Will the Govt. look into this matter? Or will this continue till all the animals are dead and no forests are left? In Gandhi's land of Ahimsa, will this killing go on?

The publication of this article in your esteemed magazine will help awaken the Govt. and create awareness in the general public about our National loss.

Report submitted to us by Mr. Dharmesh Solanki

The leopard skin that was the cause of the hubbub

Leopard skin seized by police

By Our Crime Reporter

MUMBAI: The crime branch of the city police seized a leopard skin near Shreyas Cinema in Ghatkopar (West) on Monday. They arrested Shivram Suvarna (38) in this connection.

According to assistant commissioner (crime) Dashrath Awhad, the accused was carrying the skin in a plastic bag. "He was planning to sell the skin to some unknown party before the police team arrested him," he said. The skin was estimated to be worth over a lakh rupees. The police suspect that Suvarna was a part of an international racket dealing in illegal sale of animal skins.

Police inquiries revealed that Suvarna did not possess a licence to carry the skin. "He is a native of Chikmangrul in Karnataka," Mr Awhad said. "He was previously arrested by the Mumbai police in an economic offence involving sale of duplicate shares. After his release, Suvarna went to Karnataka from where he procured the skin. Acting on a tip-off, the police intercepted him near Shreyas Cinema in Ghatkopar and checked his plastic bag. Since he could not furnish a licence for possessing the leopard skin, we arrested him," Mr Awhad added. Suvarna was booked under the Wildlife Protection Act.

Figure1: Newspaper report on the find

Ostrich (Farming) rears its head again

November 1997 saw the efforts of a unique industry trying to enter India: Ostrich Farming. Through advertisements in the newspapers and a seminar held in Bangalore, the promoters of this new occupation, Global Ostrich India Pvt. Ltd., tried to attract Indian entrepreneurs using slogans like *Get rich with ostrich!* The qualities of ostrich meat, ostrich leather, and other products made from the ostrich's body as well as the worldwide market for such products were flaunted by the company. The proposal was to import day-old live chicks from Australia and raise them here as either breeder stock or for slaughter. Abattoirs were to be set up for killing these birds at the tender age of 1–2 years, when their natural lifespan extends upto 80 years. Since the products of slaughter would not find a domestic market on account of cultural (dis)preferences and their high cost, they were to be exported to other countries where the demand exists. The ostrich was thus to be the next animal in the long line of animals that have been made to give up their lives for the sake of us "getting rich."

Three and a half years after we organised and led a protest in Bangalore (refer the Spring 1998 issue of *Compassionate Friend*) against this proposal for ostrich farming being floated in the state, and received a verbal assurance from the Chief Minister himself that proposals for such projects would not be entertained in the state, we stand faced with the same issue again, and in more regions of India than just Karnataka. Now Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra join Karnataka as the states that want to have a go at condemning a flock of this exotic species to death.

A letter we received from an organisation with which we have worked closely in Bangalore brings to our attention the development. We reproduce below excerpts from the letter.

To the collective shock and dismay of all animal welfare Organisations in Bangalore, we heard and saw the news that 100 Ostrich chicks worth Rs. 4 lakhs have been imported in India by the Dept. of Animal Husbandry, Chennai. This was aired on the Tamil News Channel on 26th April 2000 at 8 a.m. on Sun T.V. and Raj T.V.

They are presently housed in the Centre for Livestock Management, Chennai for 30 days after which the chicks will be shifted to Kattupalli on a 4 acre plot of land.

These will form the basis for "Experimental Farming" and to study their "environmental adaptation to Indian climatic conditions".

We also give below the text of a note issued by the government regarding the imported chicks.

Note regarding import of 100 Day-Old Ostrich chicks by Tamilnadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University

1. In G. O. Ms. No. 149 dated 4.6.98, the State Government has sanctioned a Part II Scheme to be implemented by Tamilnadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) for the establishment of an Ostrich Research Unit at Livestock Research Station, Kattupakkam at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs. The research project is to study the adaptability of the birds to climatic conditions prevailing in Tamilnadu State.
2. Pursuant to this, TANUVAS has imported 100 day-old ostrich chicks from M/S. Jelita Impian SDN BHD, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by air on 25.4.2000 after following all the necessary formalities.
3. On arrival, the birds were kept at the Animal Quarantine and Certification Centre, Pallikarani, Chennai, which is a zGovernment of India establishment. The birds were moved to the Livestock Research Station, Kattupakkam on 6.5.2000 as the infrastructure to maintain the birds were not available at the Quarantine Centre. The birds are housed in specially created facilities and strict quarantine conditions are being continued. Till date, 13 chicks have died because of indigestion (crop impaction), trampling, travel stress etc. University laboratory tests have not revealed the presence of any contagious disease. Dead chicks were incinerated as per standard protocols. Remaining birds are healthy.

4. Before the University had embarked on this project, considerable interest had been evinced by the local farmers. Since this is an experimental project, the State Government felt that the research work could be carried out in an academic institution like TANUVAS.
5. Ostriches are reared elsewhere in the world for meat, leather, feathers and also for providing replacement corneal grafts. If the adaptive trials are successful, there is considerable scope to earn foreign exchange. The import of the birds has been done in the best interests of the farmers.

Licenses have, apparently, been issued thus far to Vet. Dept., Tamil Nadu and Global Ostrich India, Bangalore.

We present to you opposite a fact-sheet that we prepared in 1997 to provide information to the general public on the topic of ostrich farming. This fact-sheet was prepared after careful and rigorous research from all sources of information possible: research journals, internet websites, personal correspondence with organisations working abroad on this same issue. ■

An enjoyable gathering of BWC—Mumbai members

We report the Mumbai meeting of **BWC** members on 14 May 2000 with a mixture of emotions: good and bad. The bad first: of almost *fifteen hundred* members from that city, we got responses for the meeting from not more than fifteen people! There were those who called up after they learnt that the meeting was over (and a success) to tell us that they were expecting to be called and informed about the meeting. Still others were not even aware that a meeting was scheduled. It is a sad commentary upon how many actually read the magazine we send them or even remove it from its envelope. Anticipating that many would never open it, we had splashed the meeting notice on the front cover, hoping it would cause the Mumbai members to open it to the relevant page and read more about it. However, it seems that we did not cover the situation of people not reading even the magazine cover! Do people expect the office bearers to sit and make 1500 personal calls inviting each person to the meeting? Maybe in the next issue, the notices should be printed on the envelope itself instead of the magazine cover!

Twelve out of the fifteen members who called actually attended the gathering, held in a house in the central locality of Matunga Road (West) of Mumbai. The meeting started off with a round of introductions to acquaint ourselves with each other. The screening of our video film ***Beauty Without Cruelty*** followed. Many were watching it for the first time and the revulsion they felt at seeing the cruelties present in the manufacture of consumer products was evident on their faces. Probably the quiet victory of the day was the announcement by Shireen Karanjia that she had decided to turn vegetarian thenceforth. Nothing brings sweeter joy to us at **BWC** than to hear of such changes of heart brought on by self-persuasion. *That* is the way of **BWC**.

Ongoing tasks and activities of **BWC** were discussed (over refreshments) after the film and those present were asked to identify areas in which they could contribute their efforts. It was made very clear that some participation in effort was expected from all members and that without that the organisation could achieve nothing. Everybody came forward to volunteer to do something or the other that they felt competent and strongly about, making us more confident about achieving concrete milestones in the fight for animal rights in Bombay.

Future meetings

It was also felt by those present that the meetings be made a regular affair, to be held at least once a month. To act upon that consensus, we propose the **last Sunday of each month** to be the official meeting date of **BWC**—Mumbai members. This works out to August 27, September 24, October 29, November 26, and December 31. Mumbai members are requested to call us up at 204 1046 (contact: Hiren Kara, our Mumbai Center Director) or 577 8623 (contact: Ranjit Konkar, trustee, **BWC**) to confirm their decision to attend as well as to enquire about the venue of the meeting. We intend to make the meetings more than just reports of activities: we will try to arrange talks on related issues by invited speakers, audio-visual presentations on relevant topics, and of course, purely vegan refreshments for all. ■

Ostrich farming and India: a closer look

Is everything about ostrich farming so rosy and positive as portrayed by the government and the promoters of this occupation? This position paper covers some of the facts we uncovered in researching the reports of ostrich farming around the world and presents our stance on the issue.

Risks in ostrich farming

The following risks in this new farming were uncovered by us in our own study of the occupation:

- RISK OF DISEASE: News agencies in South Africa have reported the occurrence of deadly Congo fever at an ostrich abattoir, resulting in the *death* of some of the workers. Congo fever causes body organs to degenerate, accompanied by massive internal as well as external bleeding. 30 percent of Congo fever cases are fatal. South Africa's agriculture minister had to order a halt to the slaughter of the birds to protect the workers. In the words of the spokesman of the ostrich company himself, "*the perfect opportunity for an abattoir worker to contract the disease from a tick was at the start of the slaughter line where feathers are plucked by hand.*" Do we want to expose Indians to such problems?
- RISK OF INJURY: Adult ostriches are extremely difficult to handle and are known to inflict severe injuries with their strong legs. In the absence of specialised training in the humane handling of the birds, rough handling is resorted to resulting in injuries to both worker and bird. The Humane Society of United States has captured footage of conditions on an ostrich farm that show (see Figure 1) that the ostrich—being essentially a wild creature—is inherently unsuited to domestication or being "farmed."
- RISK OF NON-ADAPTATION: Ostriches are dry-weather birds. They do not possess the preen glands that other birds do, which cover their feathers with a protective layer of body oil, 'waterproof'ing them, as it were. Ostrich feathers become soaking wet upon exposure to water. Thus, there could be adverse effects upon the birds' health if they are not kept protected from the rains. India's rainy climate is directly opposed to the ostrich's natural requirements. This being the case, would the ostrich survive in India?

Figure 1: Rough handling of ostriches at a farm: Pulling the ostrich by its neck, even twisting the neck, and grappling with it to force it into submission.

- RISK OF HATCHERY EPIDEMICS: An essential step in the 'farming' of ostriches is artificial incubation of their eggs: breeding birds are denied the opportunity of incubating their own eggs. Such artificially hatched chicks are seen to be very susceptible to diseases: about 30% of them die. The unnatural diets fed to them also aggravates the problem. Chicks in the wild do not suffer from such problems because they are accompanied and protected by an adult for up to 9 months and eat what nature provides.

The costs of ostrich farming

Before embarking upon any project, the carrying capacity of the place for the project has

to be evaluated. In other words, the suitability of the place to support the project, the capacity of its natural resources to meet the demands of the project, the burden that the project places upon the local economy, environment, and ecology all have to be ascertained. ***No such study has been done*** to our knowledge. Even in this, ostrich farming comes out far from blemishless:

- *Ostrich farming is land-intensive.* Large areas of land are required to raise the birds. A maximum stocking density of 2–3 birds per acre is recommended by experts. Do we have the luxury of so much land in India? Even if non-arable lands are to be used, is it not more beneficial for everyone concerned to try to plant trees on those lands than to raise an animal species for export purposes?
- *Raising a single ostrich for slaughter requires almost 600 kg of feed!* This feed consists of a mixture of grain and grass. As opposed to this, the meat yield from one bird is only 30 kg. Even assuming only half the feed to be grain and the other half grass, this still means a 10:1 ratio of grain fed to meat produced. This is a criminal waste of grain that can be used to feed humans directly. Ostrich farming, like all other animal farming, is a negative productivity process: what one gets out of it is many times less than what one has to put into it. In a country like India, where millions live under the minimum nutrition level, such a waste of grain is not acceptable. It is not even as if the meat were to be fed to Indians. It is planned to be wholly exported.
- *Potential ill-effects upon our ecology, environment, and local animal wealth:* Before introducing a new species in a region, it is essential to make a thorough study of the effects of the new species on the native ecosystem. How would it affect the local flora and fauna? How would it be affected by these, in turn? Would we burden our ecosystem by the introduction of the ostrich into India? Ostriches have been seen to be susceptible to diseases similar to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, still fresh in everyone's minds (under the name of Mad Cow disease) for having afflicted British cattle a few years ago. Under these conditions, the fact that the states that are to go in for ostrich farming (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu) are rich in wildlife and other local fauna is a matter of great concern since these would now be in potential danger. India, with its forest and animal wealth, cannot afford the risk of having its rich fauna, wild or domestic, be affected by diseases brought in by the introduction of a foreign species not suited to the local environment.

Figure 2: Live, defeathered ostriches: The blood oozing out at the roots of the feather stalks tell us of the pain that the ostrich must go through when having its feathers plucked.

Animal rights

And what of the bird in question? A point of view long kept under wraps in the business of animal husbandry but one that deserves attention and questioning is that of the fundamental ethics of farming animals as commodities for our use. In short, the 'animal rights' issue, illustrated in the specific instance of ostrich farming by the following practices:

- *Defeathering of live ostriches*: To obtain the birds' feathers in their most attractive and saleable form, the feathers are plucked from the birds *while they are still fully conscious and alive.* It need not be stressed how painful it must be to have this done to a large, sentient creature with fully developed senses. Figure 2 depicts the condition of ostriches defeathered in this manner.
- *Premature killing of ostriches*: Killing the birds at 1–3 years of age, the normal practice in ostrich farming, when the normal lifespan of

the ostrich in nature ranges up to 80 years is akin to practising infanticide upon the species. How ethical is this?

- *Transport of the live birds*: In the proposed ostrich farming project, the idea is to have centralised slaughterhouses, away from the breeding farms. This would necessitate transport of the live ostriches, possibly over long distances. Being wild in nature and large in size, ostriches would be especially awkward to handle for transport. It is very conceivable that they would be subjected to the same cruelties of transport that all other large animals are: brutal handling during loading (*e.g.*, goading with pointed prods), cramming into overcrowded spaces and being tightly tied down thus allowing no motion of limbs, and denial of food and water during the journeys.
- *The actual slaughter*: Like condemned criminals the magnificent ostriches are led hooded to their killing pen. The last moments of the ostrich are a sorry sight to watch. The kicking and flailing of the bird as it tries to escape the fate that it knows is about to befall it are heart-rending. That this should be the end of the bird that is essentially a wild and free (as yet) species is a shame to us. Methods of slaughter of the bird the world around include beheading, bleeding to death, gassing (see Figure 3), and shooting in the head by a shotgun.

Figure 3: A worker placing the hood over the bird's head, in preparation for gassing it to death.

Cultural concerns

Attitude towards animals

Ostriches are being proposed to be bred solely to be killed. This attitude, of considering every animal a commodity for our use, is very antithetical to Indian culture. We preach respect for all forms of life on one hand, and on the other, we would be actively promoting slaughter through such schemes. While the consciences of people even in the materialistic West are rejecting the cruel methods of intensive farming of food animals practised there, we in India seem to be rejoicing in newer and newer ways of exploiting animals for our ends. Animal husbandry now seems to mean only how to raise animals to kill them in the end. Traditional tillers of the soil are being taught occupations like silkworm production, poultry-farming, rabbit-farming, and now they will be taught ostrich-farming!

In contrast, in the Western countries, public consumption of veal (calf meat) has become a matter of great shame for the cruelty that production of this meat involves; more and more people are moving away from red meat; British Airways has, on public demand, *withdrawn ostrich meat from its menu*; Sweden has banned intensive factory farming. This is nothing but India's age-old wisdom of *ahimsa* being rediscovered. It is ironical that we should be blind to the teachings of our own saints and reject our own cultural heritage when its virtues are being accepted and practised by others today.

Do we want our children to regard us as the generation that took away the freedom of the grandest bird alive today? That turned the largest, free, wild flightless bird into a house bird to be killed for its flesh? One of the worst effects of the kind of animal farming that ostrich farming represents is to warp children's

images of the place of animals in nature. Within a generation, we have managed to completely subjugate the proud hen into a pathetic creature imprisoned all its life in cages so small it can't even spread its wings! The notion of the hen being a creature with its own right to live a life of freedom and peace has been replaced by that of an animal whose existence is meant only for providing us tasty (?) chicken. Will we be proud to have done the same thing to the ostrich also?

Just like the existence of the numerous poultry farms dotting our countryside today has made its impact felt upon our lives through the mushrooming of illegal butcher shops and slaughterhouses at every corner of our residential localities, who is to say that ostrich farming would not have similar effects? The residential localities sooner or later have to bear with the nauseating presence of slaughterhouses near them.

Our country's needs

Why do we need to import wild birds from another country and undertake to kill them here? We should remember that we are a nation of farmers, not of butchers. How proud can we be in claiming that the increased employment opportunities that this new industry creates includes the occupation of butchery, one of the most degrading and dehumanising occupations? Is that all we have to offer to the jobless poor?

At a time when we are building our country's economy upon strong industrial legs, let us choose our occupations and industries carefully and wisely, giving full thought to all aspects, non-commercial as much as commercial, involved. Material development and spiritual, moral development need not be, indeed *should* not be mutually divorced. Buddha had taught *Right Livelihood* as one among his Eight-Fold Path. Let us live up to his teachings. ■

What you must do

1. Choosing any *one* of the following messages(M1/M2/M3/M4):

M1 We would like to see the environmental impact assessment report on ostrich farming made public before you proceed with your plans of ostrich farming in India.

M2 We would like to see the ecological impact study of ostrich farming made public before you proceed with the plans of ostrich farming in India.

M3 Please tell us how you plan to deal with an outbreak of Congo fever known to occur in ostrich slaughterhouses abroad.

M4 Sir, with all due respects, we do not want to see India turn into a slaughterhouse for the largest bird alive.

2. Select the most popular newspaper in your city

3. Using the format opposite, please send a personal letter to the **Union Minister of Commerce, Government of India, 83 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110003**, that has sanctioned the project, to register your protest and to ask them to reconsider the project.

Dear Sir,

We have come to learn that your ministry has sanctioned a proposal for ostrich farming in various parts of India!

[Your message(M1/M2/M3/M4)]

It is my view that you please reconsider your decision to introduce ostrich farming to India.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Cc: <newspaper in your city>

We are requesting you this time to send a copy of the letter to the most popular newspaper in your city so that the issue gets prominence in the news media. As usual, send in to us xerox copies of what you post, with your name on the copy so that we keep track of which of our readers are active in contributing to the cause (we may have a prize for the most active, so keep those letters going out).

With this issue, we introduce this column on Veganism (pronounced vee-gun-ism) so that an awareness about this vitally important concept, fundamentally relevant to the ethics of our treatment of animals and to our own health, grows among our people in India. To many in this country the term itself might be new. It almost seems like a misspelling or shortening of the word 'vegetarian.' But whether people know of the term or not, we at **Beauty Without Cruelty** feel that veganism is an idea with which one can ill afford to remain unacquainted, with the numbers of hybrid, Jersey cows that we see around us nowadays increasing by the day, indicating the high gear into which milk consumption has moved. The time is now ripe to deal with this issue in a rigorous and systematic manner, because in it might lie the seeds of a future that would free the domestic animals of much of their bondage to us humans.

Veganism is a concept that raises many eyebrows, that challenges many traditional, universally held beliefs, especially in the Indian context. However, it is a belief arrived at through logical thought and rational reasoning, and has as strong a philosophical basis as traditional vegetarianism. In this opening issue on Veganism, after introducing the subject, we will concern ourselves with one specific aspect of it: the issue of milk. — *Editor*

Veganism: the ethical imperative

What is veganism?

Veganism is a lifestyle which seeks to abstain (to the extent possible) from the use of any product or habit or behavior that might, at *any* stage of its development, have involved visitation of *any* harm upon *any* sentient creature. Such harm might be in the form of deliberately inflicted fear, discomfort, injury, or death; or even the unfairness of depriving others of what is rightfully theirs.

The vegan philosophy (a) extends *ahimsa* to aspects of our lives besides just food (for example, clothing), (b) recognises other forms of harm besides death, such as deprivation, mental torture, physical abuse, (for example, use of products tested on animals), and (c) recognises indirect as well as direct responsibility (for example, use of 'by-products'). It does not consider the deprivation of a calf from its mother's milk as trivial; it views it with as much seriousness as depriving a human child of *it's* mother's milk. It considers the use of *any* product of slaughter, like leather, as wrong as the so-called 'primary product,' namely, meat, because by sharing in the spoils of the condemned act, the wrongful act of slaughter is encouraged.

What distinguishes a vegan?

We as humans cause harm to animals in many ways: killing, injuring, or breeding them for obtaining their body parts of use to us; using them as subjects to experiment upon; using them as objects of our entertainment and curiosity, *etc.* The vegan seeks to eschew *all* items, edible or otherwise, that have *any* animal ingredients or are in any way associated with ill-treatment to animals, *e.g.*, milk and milk products, leather, wool, honey.

In the matter of food, veganism wholly subsumes traditional vegetarianism. In India, 'pure vegetarianism,' *i.e.*, the abstinence from all flesh and eggs but not milk, is common hence it does not attract attention. This definition of vegetarianism is also called 'lacto-vegetarianism.' However, *the defining characteristic of a vegan is his complete abstinence from milk and milk products*. The reason this becomes quickly apparent is the ubiquity of milk products in our diet in India and the difficulty of avoiding them in a normal meal. Thus, veganism finds its most major hurdle in the need for socialising while simultaneously maintaining one's principles where dairy products are concerned. Besides milk, a conscientious vegan would avoid honey, too.

Then come substances used in articles of clothing and personal wear. Foremost among these is leather. A person claiming to be a vegan automatically attracts attention to his footwear, the most common article made of leather. These (should) usually turn out to be canvas or synthetic leather or plastic. Wool is the other common animal substance that falls under the vegan's scrutiny.

The milk of human (un)kindness...

The opposition of veganism to milk is based upon...

A. ...the fact that humans do not *need* (cow's or any other animal's) milk. Our consumption of

it is therefore a luxury (actually a health hazard, as mentioned later).

B. ... the fact that there *is* someone—the calf—who *does* need the milk. It's life depends upon it.

C. ... the fact that there isn't enough milk to provide to both man and calf. The supply of milk is limited by nature's program for mammalian animals to produce only as much milk as is needed by the infant.

D. ... the stand that it is wrong to tamper with nature's program and obtain excess production of milk (for example, by genetically altering the structure of the animal or by stimulating it pharmaceutically to do so) or force upon it excessively frequent conditions of pregnancy by artificial means.

E. ...the conclusion that therefore it is an act of both theft and murder to take away for our pleasure something that belongs to someone else to the extent that it costs the other its life.

The practices that are adopted in the dairy business bear out the motivation for the above beliefs:

- ***MURDER*** of male calves. Deliberate infliction of death upon the calves, qualifying for no weaker a term than 'murder,' is a universal practice in dairies.
- Physical abuse of the dairy animal (cow/buffalo) in the form of injections to stimulate milk production and to also induce a continual round of pregnancies,
- Denial to the dairy animals of their mating instincts by the increasing practice of artificial insemination.
- In most cases, lifelong imprisonment of the cattle by being tied to stalls.
- Deprivation to the calves (those allowed to live) of their mother's milk, by diverting it to consumption by humans.

Relevance of veganism to India

Most people in India, when told of veganism, react by saying that such conditions as described above may be true in foreign countries, but not in India, and hence that it doesn't justify the extreme stand of abstinence from milk. Popular conception among Indians is that in our country the animal (cow or calf) is not killed, the calf is not deprived, and that there is enough milk left over for us to wallow in, so everyone can be happy and drink as much milk as he or she wants. In this land where milk is considered as *amrut*, people, especially the 'pure vegetarians,' react with disbelief and sometimes scorn to hear doubts being cast over the ethics of consuming milk. Expression of open disbelief over reported accounts of conditions in milk production is followed by lengthy, multi-dimensional justifications of milk consumption. It is the purpose of the next section to show the assumptions of these people to be WRONG...

The reality of milk: male infanticide

Killing of calves happens all over India, from rural cooperatives to urban dairies that supply milk to customers. People unwilling to believe this fact are referred to a 1987 report[4] produced by the government itself, in which is admitted on page 30 that *"Rearing male buffalo calves, and calves born in dairies, now being killed off soon after birth ..."*, and on page 100 that *"...5 to 8 million buffalo calves are done to death immediately after birth."* These figures are for 1987. With the Jersey cow population explosion nowadays, the number of 'worthless' calves produced and killed has increased manyfold. There is even a morbid term, *kaTra*, (कटरा) now, coined for the unwanted male calf condemned to be 'cut up' by the butcher. Figure 1 shows such calves being led to slaughter.

The killing is done by a host of methods: starvation (being "allowed to die"), crude methods like burying the calves in a dung heap (reported in a buffalo dairy outside Pune), feeding them contaminated water after one week's starvation following birth, or, most commonly, by selling them off to the butcher. **And why does it happen?** Because we compete with the calf for its mother's milk. We, who do not need the milk of cows, get to drink it for our taste and our mistaken beliefs of its necessity for our health. And the calves, for whom the milk was made and intended by nature, are starved of it!

Male calves of buffalos and Jersey cows, in particular, are uniformly condemned to death since they are not useful later for either tilling the soil, drawing loads, or milking, and therefore represent only a drain on the dairyman's wealth if raised and looked after. Feeding milk to the male calf doesn't fetch any return. He becomes a कटरा. Such are the shocking realities of our culture of *ahimsa*: to call the cow our

gomata and consider her body to be the abode of 33 crore gods but to simultaneously feel nothing in doing her children—our foster siblings, the calves—to death by fighting over her milk.

The customer puts his taste buds above everything else. The milkman puts his commercial interests above everything else. Between them, the loser is the animal, who the customer likes to believe is not harmed, simply because he cannot see blood in his milk like is visible on meat.

The situation in India today is that there is hardly any milk available in the cities that can be described as obtained without killing the make calf and causing deprivation to the spared calf. If the animal is a cow, the offspring has a good chance of surviving, since the cow fortunately enjoys a special position in the hearts of Hindus, and farming (livestock and agriculture) in India is mostly done by Hindus. Therefore he would not usually kill the calf of a cow unless under life-and-death economic compulsion. Unfortunately the buffalo enjoys no such privilege and is invariably condemned to death.

Common doubts regarding the idea of veganism

We give below our responses to popular, reactionary arguments and genuine queries (taken from real conversations with people over the years) put forward by Indians in questioning the tenets of veganism, particularly in relation to its stand on milk-consumption.

√ **I still don't understand what the killing of calves on dairies has to do with our drinking milk.**

To understand that, imagine that the demanded commodity was not milk but cow dung (for our fuel or fertiliser needs, say), something that was not demanded simultaneously by the calf. Would the dairyman then deny the calf its milk? No. If anything, he would make it drink all it wanted, when it wanted, *etc.*, so that it would grow up strong and healthy and be producing more of the demanded commodity. So it is only because we demand a share in the mother cow's milk—a share that is just not there—that a conflict arises and the calf is done to death.

√ **How do I know that the calf isn't getting the milk it should?**

Refer to the following sights:

- On dairies, the calves are always tied away from their mothers (see Figure 2).
- When the calf is untied, it *runs* to its mother and immediately starts feeding from her.
- The mouths of calves are often tied with rope netting when they are being taken around with the cows.
- The udders of goats are often covered with a bag and made inaccessible to their calves.

These are sights to ponder. Why should the calf be tied away from its mother? Why should its mouth sometimes have to be forced shut? Or the udders of the goat be made inaccessible to its calf? The answer to all these is that if these steps are not taken, the calf will drink its mother's milk leaving nothing for the *gwaala* to sell.

Figure 1 : Calves and cows being taken for slaughter

√ **Aren't the conditions mentioned above a case of modern-day excesses and not a fundamental imperative of the business? Isn't there a 'right amount' of milk that one can have without causing deprivation to the calf?**

First of all, milk deprivation to the calf is not only a modern phenomenon, it has been coming down through the ages. It is true that if we restricted our consumption of milk to that required for whitening tea, for example, there wouldn't be significant deprivation to the calf and this wouldn't be a serious ethical question. But businesses survive on demand. In the dairy business, fulfilling demand requires deprivation. So it is a no-win situation: if you consume less, it will become too expensive or unavailable; if you consume more, you cause the calf to be killed.

√ **But the calf *is* given some milk during the day.**

Figure 2: Buffalo calf tied away from its mother at a dairy

The calf that is allowed to live is, yes. Otherwise it would die, and not grow up to be a cow to be further exploited for its milk. However, two feedings a day, that too only long enough to get the milk to start flowing so that the milkman can continue milking it with his hands, is all they are allowed. *The calf is then forced away and tied once again away from its mother.* This sight can be seen in any dairy. Clearly, the small amount of milk the calf is allowed to have is not enough. Drs. Gokhale and Gangwal (page 114, [3]) say that the calf needs to feed *sixteen* times a day. How can one feeding for a few minutes be considered alright just because the calf doesn't die?

√ But today's hybrid, Jersey cows give so much milk. The calf doesn't need all the milk that the cow produces. So what's wrong if we take some?

Nothing, if we took 'some' and the calf got its fill. Today we get our fill and the calf gets 'some.' We must also question where so much milk has suddenly started coming from. It is against the program of nature to make any mammal produce milk much beyond its offspring's requirement for it. This excessive production has become possible only recently by application of modern, perverted techniques of animal husbandry in which the cow is viewed as a commodity to be squeezed to its capacity and is genetically modified and pharmaceutically stimulated to give a quantity of milk out of all proportion to what their calves need or that their own bodies can withstand (see Figure 3). This results in diseases of the udders like mastitis and in hormonal imbalances. This method of producing excess milk is fundamentally unacceptable to veganism.

√ But won't it cause the cow pain if she *isn't* milked?

Sure it will, if nobody milks her. But nature intended the calf, not human beings, to 'milk' its mother. If the calf is allowed to drink its mother's milk unhindered, then it will empty the udders sufficiently to not cause pain. It is only when the calf is prevented from drinking its mother's milk *and* the cow is not milked by us too that it might create discomfort for her.

√ Man has been drinking milk throughout history. Why is it objectionable now?

Drinking milk is a cultural habit; we have no biological need for it, no ecological dependence upon it, nor a genetic capacity to digest it.

√ Isn't milk essential for our good health? Ayurveda says so.

No. Milk is not good for us. All current research and experimentation by nutritionists is pointing to milk as a big culprit in health problems for its high saturated fat and cholesterol contents, its excessive protein-to-calcium ratio, its indigestibility for some people. People can at best cope with it. But even if it were good in some ways, that doesn't give us any right to steal it from other animals in the quantities we do. Most of us would agree that more and more money is good for us, but would that give us a right to steal it from others?

If Ayurveda says milk is necessary for our health then it has to explain how so many people who do not take milk are leading healthy lives. Besides, Ayurveda is not the last word in human knowledge. It is limited by the knowledge of its period.

√ Don't we *need* milk to grow?

The only milk we ever really *need*—during our infancy, when our teeth and digestive systems are not developed enough for us to eat solid food—is our own mother's milk. Not cow's (or any other animal's) milk. Cow's milk is for cows, buffaloes' milk is for buffaloes, human's milk is for humans. Man is the only animal that drinks the milk of other species and that too beyond infancy. We don't find dogs drinking horses' milk, or tigers drinking elephants' milk. In fact, no species has the need to live off another species' infant food. Once we grow up, the requirement for our mother's milk declines, as does her body's production of milk, maintaining nature's balance.

√ Isn't animal protein necessary for humans? Vegetarians have no other source of it but milk.

No nutrition text can be quoted as saying that animal proteins are necessary for the human body.

The best of nutritionists do say, on the other hand, that the quality of protein from plant sources is superior.

√ **Isn't the *purpose* of the cow to give us milk? Isn't man *meant* to drink the milk of cows, by nature's plan? Didn't God create Man and cattle to depend upon one another for sustenance?**

If man were genetically *meant*, in some way to be dependent upon cattle milk for his biological needs, then there could not have existed the vast numbers of tribes and races that do not consume any milk. In our own country, the people of the North-eastern states consume no milk. World over, lakhs of vegans are living healthily for years without touching any milk products.

√ **Lord Krishna used to consume butter and milk products. Doesn't that make it alright for us to take it also?**

The Lord Krishna in his childhood is described in the Mahabharata to have admonished the milkwomen of Braj who made a good business supplying milk to the city of Mathura, saying "Just because the cows can't speak, does it mean that you should deprive their calves of their milk? First the calves will drink to their fill, and only then will the remaining milk be distributed among the *Brajwaasis*." Thus we can see that although Lord Krishna was an ardent lover of milk products, he never lost concern for the cow, and could be said to possess the spirit of what is today advocated by veganism.

√ **Gandhiji used to take goat's milk. Doesn't this prove that some milk is necessary?**

Quite aside from the fact that Gandhiji's opinions on the matter need not drive ours, his opposition to all milk was well known. One should not forget that he had taken a vow never to consume cow's milk, because of the mistreatment of the animal all over India (page 203, [2] : "...Doctors advised milk. But the cruel manner of milking cows and buffaloes had impelled Gandhi to abjure milk forever"). Till the end he admitted that in spirit his vow should have included the milk of all species (refer pages 196, 201, [6]). To make up for the inconsistency in his principle of *ahimsa* as applied to milk, he would only drink the milk of his own goat that he personally took great care of.

√ **How can drinking milk be wrong? Our *shaastra* recommend it!**

Our *shaastra* also recommend the caste system, differential treatment of women, widows, *etc.* Does that sanctify these practices? The letter of the scriptures should not substitute our applying our own minds to the subject.

√ **If we don't drink the milk of cows, won't they be sent off to slaughter?**

By drinking milk, the calf is being sent off to slaughter. So is there a difference? If, on the other hand, everyone turned vegan, no animal—calf or cow or bull—would die at our hands, because no-one would want their meat or leather or milk.

√ **Shouldn't we worry about the livelihood of the milkmen?**

Certainly we should, but to support them in an exploitative livelihood is not the answer. Exploiting one to provide for the other is not good justice. Campaigns against smoking or liquor or *gutkha*, are not seen to concern themselves with alternative sources of livelihood for the displaced segments of those industries.

Veganism and India

The philosophy of veganism (and certainly the term itself) is fairly recent. Its practice has been largely absent from India, at least as regards adherence to the letter of the creed. Milk and milk products are so intimately a part of the Indian diet that their use has never aroused moral censure. They are even recommended by the scriptures and our system of health, *ayurveda*. Similarly, leather is so common a substance in handicrafts and articles of domestic use that it goes unquestioned. To the partial credit of Indian vegetarians, however, one must say that we use leather only under the naive misconception that leather comes from the skin of

Figure 3 : A Cow genetically altered to produce unnaturally excessive milk

animals that have died a natural death. Similarly, we use milk imagining urban dairies to be operating with the care and concern of rural folk.

Indians who have been vegans in spirit

Although veganism as a creed originated in the West, people would be interested to note that we have had the issue represented in spirit by people in our own history. Gandhiji's opposition to milk has been mentioned above. The leather he used was never that of slaughtered animals. It would seem to make him a vegan in spirit.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave was another person who recognised the need for the ethic of veganism in the following of *ahimsa*. In a section titled *Forsaking meat-eating: a great experiment in ahimsa*, in his lectures on the *Bhagwad Gita* (page 226, [1]), he writes: 'Man should also experiment in completely giving up his consumption of milk. For humans to drink the milk of other animals is also improper. Ten thousand years later, people will say about us: "What, they had to consider not drinking milk as an observance? How could they drink milk? How could they be so barbaric?"'

The principles of Lord Krishna were mentioned earlier in this document. Milk-lover though he was, he never tolerated the deprivation to the calf of its mother's milk.

Swaami Satchidananda, although not proscribing dairy products, has this to say (page 24, [5]): "...As for milk products, if you want to be a strict vegetarian, you can certainly do without dairy products. ...And certainly we can live very well without milk products, eating only fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, and nuts."

So we have some great thinkers in our own culture who have advocated *ahimsa* to the extent advocated in veganism.

Steps in becoming a vegan

Giving up milk need not be an instant process. One can decide to spend one day a week without consuming *any* milk products. The frequency of abstinence can slowly be increased as one grows more convinced of the idea and as one's will power improves.

If one is not willing to give up milk altogether, either because one is unconvinced about the degree of milk consumption that might be harmful, or because one is ethically maintaining a cow for oneself, then one should definitely do all one can in taking care that deprivation is not caused. This is well within the capacity and is definitely the responsibility of every milk-consuming person. What one eats, for what purpose one eats, and how often one eats should be controlled. The following steps would go a long way towards the ethic of non-deprivation:

1. Stop eating *kharvas* (*baari*). This is the Marathi (Gujarati) name for the sweet that is made from the colostrum or the thick, sticky milk, called *cheek* or *kees*, of the newly-calved cow. This is the sole food of the new-born calf. Don't take even that away from it. Avoid this food like meat.
2. Avoid distributing—or accepting—*miThai* and other milk sweets to celebrate. Celebration should not be at another's cost. The amount of milk needed to make sweets is not ignorable and certainly not what a cow can spare after its calf has consumed its fill.
3. Avoid eating "pleasure-foods" made of milk, *e.g.*, ice-cream, milk-shake, *etc*. Remember, our pleasure is at the cost of the calves' survival.
4. For the sake of your own health, avoid eating unhealthy milk products like *ghee*, *paneer*, butter, cheese.
5. If you *must* drink milk drink cow's milk, not buffalo's, since it is more likely that the cow would have been treated well than the buffalo.

Veganism: an extension of vegetarianism, not in competition with it

Veganism holds the promise of

- Good health for us humans
- A full life of complete freedom to all animals, unfettered by slavery to man
- The channeling of our limited resources of land, water, energy, and feed from the raising of animals to the direct betterment of our own living conditions.

(More on these in our next issue–*Editor*). It is stressed once again to those thinking that veganism is some new fad or a dogma taken to the extreme that it is just a logical extension of the founding principle of vegetarianism, *viz.*, *ahimsa*. One cannot take kindness and compassion too far. There is always room for more. ■

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Veganism loses its foremost spokesman

Jay Dinshah (66) has passed away. This name would probably be unknown to people in India, but it is a name that should be of special importance to the readers of this magazine. Our sorrow in reporting to our readers the death of Jay is mitigated by our honour of introducing him first. Our readers, especially the vegans among them, will be interested to learn that Jay Dinshah was the founder of the American Vegan Society. Born in 1934 to the Zoroastrian faith and of Indian ancestry, Jay began his life's work in the 1950s and did more to promote the vegan lifestyle in America than any other individual. Vowing that he would not stop working for the cause until *all* the slaughterhouses were closed, he founded the American Vegan Society, which has its office in Malaga, New Jersey, USA, and tirelessly worked to combine his message of compassion to thousands of people through direct public addresses, through the American Vegan Society periodical *Ahimsa*, through videotapes such as *The Pillars of Ahimsa*, among other means. We at **Beauty Without Cruelty** had the good fortune to meet the man personally and were struck by his humility, his simplicity, his approachability, his openness, his boldness, and his genuine sincerity and dedication to his life's work, the cause of veganism. He possessed a wonderful sense of humour which made listening to him a pleasure. He valued human relations: at an address given by him to the Peninsula Vegetarians of the Bay Area, California, USA, and attended by one of us, it was remarkable that given the freedom to speak on any topic of his choice, he chose not to get into a sales pitch of veganism, on which he could certainly claim to be an expert, but instead spoke on the issue of communication between humans. He stressed the importance of not being vain, of not developing a superior attitude to non-vegetarians simply because one was vegan oneself. It was very important, he said, to not condemn, get angry at, or look down upon others who are not vegans. Instead, the same compassion and sympathy that they feel towards animals should be used by vegans to win over by gentleness and love those people who eat meat. What humility from a person who had such an important message to give to the world!

Jay's death occurred on 8 June, 2000, in the early morning, sitting at his desk working. According to reports received, Jay's wife, Freya, found him face down on the floor in his office. Jay was known to give all of his time (seven days a week) for the movement. Freya surmises that he worked himself to death but that he died as he would have wanted to: working. He was to be cremated on 12 June. There was to be a memorial event when the Board of the American Vegan Society met on 24 June. Freya and their family plan to continue Jay's work; they will be at the World Vegetarian Congress at Toronto with their bookstall.

May Jay's soul rest in peace.

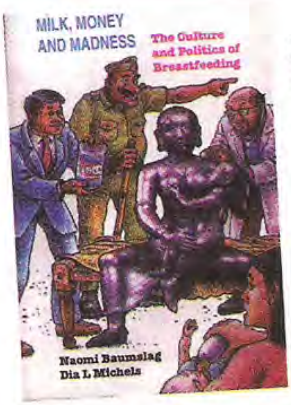
Beauty Without Cruelty *wishes to remind its readers that the book* Compassion: The Ultimate Ethic, *that we distributed to our readers through the Spring 1998 issue of* Compassionate Friend *was a gift from Jay Dinshah's organisation.* ■

Reminder about filling up membership updates

We were serious when we said in our last issue that we need you to fill out and send us the membership update form contained in it right inside the back cover. Up to now, we have received a hundred and thirty four forms and we hope that the rest of you send in your forms soon. We are conducting this exercise to benefit *you*, so that the delivery of our magazine and other material to you is done in the most efficient manner possible with fewest delays, 'Sender not found' returns, calls from you to complain that you did not receive the magazine or the book. So please send in those update forms and help us in managing our work better for your satisfaction. ■

Book Review

The opportunity for us to review this book comes at a very apt time. The press was flooded with reactions to the remark made by our Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment on milk (cow's): that drinking it is akin to consuming blood. The provocative simile touched a raw nerve in many Indians, appearing even blasphemous to some, and most people were successively mystified, scornful, and dismissive about it. The possibility of this line of thinking is completely alien to us in this country. Casting aspersions on milk! The nectar for human beings, the very source of all life, almost. 'Given' to us by that animal whose body is the abode of thirty three crore gods and goddesses! What could possibly be wrong with it? The book we have (intentionally) chosen for our review this time—*MILK, MONEY, AND MADNESS: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*—addresses this topic from the angle of presenting the positive benefits of (human) mother's milk. We review it here to complement our treatment of the topic of veganism elsewhere in this issue. —*Editor*



MILK, MONEY, AND MADNESS: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding.

Authors:
Naomi Baumslag and Dia L Michels.
Published by:
The Other India Press, Mapusa, Goa, India. 1995

The subject matter of this book would fall under the title of 'Health.' Of the many aspects and contributing factors of human health, the authors are authorities in a very key aspect—that of infant nutrition. The central mission of the authors in this book is to remind the reader of the enormous benefits in health that are to be ours *for free* if we revert to the practice of breastfeeding our children instead of feeding them formula based on animals' milk. The passion with which they espouse the cause becomes understandable to the reader as he reads page upon page of the many advantages there are to breastfeeding and the *complete lack of <u>any</u> advantages* (that contribute towards health, that is) to formula feeding, and of the frivolous and inconsequential reasons for which we choose to fritter away what is given to us for free, and what *nobody stops us from using*. The passion is borne of the frustration at seeing our supposedly intelligent civilisation consciously and knowingly going astray and simultaneously of knowing *how within reach* is the solution.

The authors' passion does not affect their writing style, however, which remains calm, composed, and non-judgmental. By combining presentation of basic facts of biology, an appeal to logic, and a moral exhortation to recognise and act in one's best interests and to prioritise one's concerns sensibly, they succeed in making their point very convincingly. There would scarcely be a reader who would not recognise the merit of their presentation. They do not describe a new way of doing something or a new invention whose efficacy is yet to be proved. They do not seek to convert anyone to an untried habit. We are only implored to return to an old habit that, as the authors put it, has seen our species through the centuries by providing us the immunity and good health that could withstand epidemics and famines. Feeding infants cow's milk, we are warned, is not going to equip us with the same strength and (my observation here—reviewer) the effects of our deviation from this way of nature are already visible in the form of perpetual coughs and colds, allergies, and other constitutional disorders that more and more people are seen to suffer from. The authors point out that "breastfed babies...not only have fewer childhood ailments, they also have less chronic ailments throughout their lives."

The relevance of the book to the cause of animal rights comes in the chapter *Cow's Milk is for Cows.* Vindication of the cause of veganism comes from the authors telling us not as proponents of animal rights but as disinterested medical professionals that "Each species of mammal has developed its own unique milk, chemically superior for the offspring of that particular species," illustrating this with a chart giving the composition of milk of different species with the rate of growth and development of their offspring. Calves grow at twice the rate of baby humans. Humans are the slowest growing of all the

mammals. Breastfed human infants are not expected to double their birth weight for four and a half months. These data provide a hint to the folly of feeding the milk of another species to our children. The folly of feeding it to adults—who do not need it, cannot digest it, develop health problems because of it—would be almost laughable were it not for the calf-deaths and cattle-abuse caused in the process and the costs of repairing the subsequent harm to human health.

We learn other vital facts such as that the protein in cow's milk is harder to digest, that the iron in cow's milk more difficult to absorb, that the amino acid taurine (believed to be important for the development of the nervous system) is present in large amounts in human milk and *totally absent in cow's milk,* that cow's milk is deficient in lactose, the sugar that is needed for development of nerve tissue, that the enzyme lactase needed for digesting lactose *disappears after five years of age.* And so on and so forth. It is such cold, hard, undeniable facts of biology that convinces the reader of the sense in what the authors say.

Their observation about how circumstances came to be mistaken for destiny is very relevant to India's long association with the cow: "Although it has been known for centuries that asses' and goats' milks are actually closer in composition to human breast milk than to cow's milk, the crucial decision of using cow's milk as substitute for human milk was not based on nutritional superiority but on economics. As anyone who has ever tried to milk an ass can attest, the task is near impossible. Cow's milk, on the other hand, is the easiest and least expensive milk to procure." Certainly something for those to think about who claim that the cow's milk was divinely intended for humans.

The relevance of this book is very large in the industrialised world where (example of USA), one learns with amazement, 50% of all newborn children are not given a drop of their mother's milk, drugs are taken by women to actually suppress lactation, and breastfeeding is actually illegal if done outside the privacy of one's home. USA apparently has the lowest breastfeeding rates and highest infant mortality rates in the industrialised world. A large price to pay for industrialization if the accompanying culture actually ensures the *death* of the highest fraction of its children compared to others.

This results not only in far below-optimum health of its citizens, but also in the accompanying abuse of animals for a commodity—milk—that was not only never intended for us, but which is actually harmful for us. Even in India the book acquires a lot of relevance because years of brainwashing by the supposedly more knowledgeable corporate giants of the technologically advanced countries has left us thinking that it is the right thing to do to feed Cerelac to our infants instead of breast milk (and, later, other natural foods). The authors tell us that unlike breast milk, "Formula does not contain living cells, has no antibodies, and does not alter to accommodate to each baby's changing needs."

Arising from the health benefits to be had from the habit of breastfeeding are the economic advantages: "healthcare savings from avoiding non-chronic diseases in the first year of life would be $2–4 billion annually. Unlike preventive measures that can take decades to appreciate savings in health costs, breastfeeding produces cost savings within the first few weeks and months. The irony of the situation is that the formula sales industry is now bigger than ever, generating an astounding $22 million *every day* in revenues—when *the superior substance is free!*"

The authors also point out the environmental aspects of breastmilk: "it is one of the few foodstuffs that is packaged and delivered to the consumer without any pollution, unnecessary packaging, or waste. If every child in America were bottle-fed, almost 86K tons of tin would be needed to produce 550 million cans for just one year's worth of formula. If every mother in UK breastfed, 3000 tons of paper (labels) would be saved in one year." The hygiene aspect is very relevant to India where the resourcefulness and ingenuity displayed in adulterating cow's milk could be utilized productively elsewhere and where the state of hygiene in *tabelas* if made public would turn the customers vegan.

The book isn't just a serious exposition of the benefits of breastmilk. One comes to learn many new and interesting facts, some bordering on the astonishing: that not all adult mammal lactates only after conception and birth, that "certain species such as elephants and foxes lactate and suckle young without ever giving birth." A new term one picks up is 'galactogogue': foods and herbs that increase milk flow.

The authors also cover breastfeeding customs around the world, wet nursing, surrogate feeding, the history of artificial feeding, the economics of

formula feed versus breast milk, and what breastfeeding means to the working woman. The section on economics especially is a very startling revelation of how commercial interests actually conspire to knowingly act against public health. One would never be able to eat a chocolate made by Nestlé without being reminded of how the company is acting against the interests of infants around the world by conveying the message that Nestlé's formula should be preferred to mother's milk.

Even though the benefits of mother's milk might seem obvious and need no advertisement (it is like debating the value of fresh, unpolluted air), the book is a must-read for all, men and women, Indians and Westerners, non-vegetarians, vegetarians, and vegans alike. —Ranjit Konkar ■

Needed for our archives: photographs of animals

While composing the bear leaflet, we had a very difficult time obtaining the 'right' picture of a performing bear and other performing animals. We finally had to purchase some from a commercial agency at rates that we cannot afford more than occasionally. Since in our awareness-raising work the need for pictures is going to only increase henceforth, we invite all of you to help us out by donating to us a copy of any animal photographs you take, so that if we ever need one we have it ready for use. So do come to our aid by lending us your photographs for our archives. First of all, we encourage all of you to do more photography of animals: carry a click-and-shoot camera with you wherever you go and don't miss the opportunity of taking interesting or good pictures of animals that you come across in your daily routine. It might be something as mundane as a cow feeding her calf or as distressing as a crowd gathered to watch a performing animal or as angering as an animal being treated cruelly or as unusual as a flying squirrel in a jungle you are trekking through. Because we do not concentrate on only specific categories of animals, we might have the need for all such photos at some time or another. And at that time, we would like to draw upon the contributions of our own members first, before going out to buy from commercial archives. Help us build our own archive of animal pictures. We will surely acknowledge you if we use the picture. ■

Taj, Mourigram signature campaigns response lukewarm ☹

The response to our signature drive has been unsatisfactory: we have received signature sheets from only 34 people for the Taj and 44 for the Mourigram matter. Where are the rest of you? While thanking the people who sent the sheets in (and each has collected a lot of signatures), we encourage all of you to send in the signatures. A lot of you have sent in xeroxes of your signature sheets and we have been collecting them here. One matter of dismay is that some of your are sending in these xeroxes without identifying who you are! We would like to clarify that the purpose of making you spend on paper and xerox and postage is for us to maintain a record of activity of each member. So we need to know *who you are*. So while keeping up the good work please mark your xeroxes with your name (and membership id's) on top. It might all add up to a surprise for you at the end of the year if you are judged the most active member. ■

Gathering of BWC—Kolkata members on September 24, 2000

On the same lines as the meeting of Mumbai members, we would like to get our Kolkata members together and chart the future of **BWC**—Kolkata. The date for the scheduled gathering is September 24, 2000. All Kolkata members are requested to contact our Kolkata Centre Director Purnima Toolsidass at 247 9737 to confirm the venue and exact timing of the gathering. The goal of the gathering is to acquaint our Kolkata members with each other and to allow them to plan among themselves periodic, regular local activities that would keep them in touch with the cause and take the work of **BWC** further. Our video ***Beauty Without Cruelty*** would be screened at the gathering for the benefit of those who have not had a chance to watch it yet. So Kolkata members, please do not forget to give the above-mentioned number a ring (at normal hours, please) and confirm that you would be attending. We hope for a full-house. ■

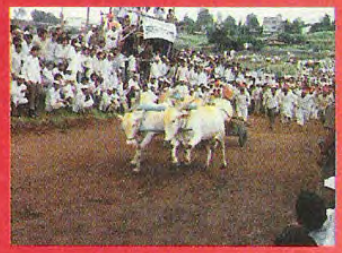
Beauty Without Cruelty—India
and
The Captive Animals' Protection Society
appeal to you to cooperate and join in the crusade to bring to an end the practice of 'dancing bears' being dragged from city to city in the hot sun.

As a tourist all you need to do is...

- **DO NOT stop to watch bears (or any animals) perform.** Walk right past. Your attention motivates the *madaris* to lure you further.
- **DO NOT give the *madaris* any money.** *Your dollar goes a long way*...in encouraging him and others like him to capture more and more such innocent baby bears.

No patronising foreign tourists, no performing bears!

Please ignore public performances of these with the same disdain and sensitivity as those of dancing bears


Bullock Cart racing

Dogs performing tricks

Monkeys performing tricks

Cockfights

Snake charming

Parrot Horoscopes

Elephants performing tricks

If you would like to contribute to our cause, please contact

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"Oh look! Performing Bears! Let me watch."

Are you one of the tourists who find themselves attracted to the spectacle of performing bears on the streets of India? ...who patronise the bear-keepers (*madaris*) by paying them for the show they put up for you? Perhaps you don't know the reality behind the show.

Come, let us take you backstage

So that you may be 'entertained' for a few moments by a dancing bear on your trip to India, the following is made to happen:

- The capture of baby bears in cold regions
- The painful drilling of a hole in the skin between their eyes and the snout
- The passing of a cord through this hole to emerge lower down through the nostril
- The extraction of their teeth and nails—the bear's only natural body weapons

Please realise that it is *solely your patronage and nothing else* that supports these cruel methods of control and training of the bears by their *madaris* to enable their easy handling.