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COMPASSIONATE FRIEND



Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty-India
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

Exotic Animals



In this Issue:
Fire Crackers
Animal Sacrifice
Banganga Tank
Fish saved
Animal Ingredients
in Medicine



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Beauty Without Cruelty
is a way of life which causes
no creature of land, sea or air
terror, torture or death


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Sujit Patwardhan

For 14 years all BWC's printing work was undertaken by Mudra Offset owned by Sujit Patwardhan, 77 years, who passed away on 22 October 2022. Mudra printed our quarterly publications *Compassionate Friend* and *Karuna-Mitra*, our annual wall calendar and all other literature since 2007.

Long before Sujit began printing our publications, he had joined BWC-India as a life member. When in 2020 his health began failing and he decided to wind up his printing press, it was most thoughtful of him to have gone out of his way to put all his clients in touch with another printing press.

Sujit Patwardhan was well known as the Founder & Trustee of Parisar, an organisation working for the environment and sustainable people-centric cities.

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From my Desk...

Mid-Day Meals

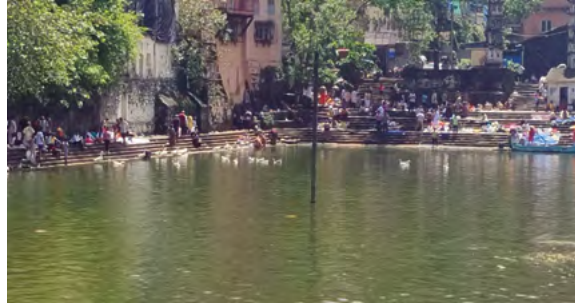
The Karnataka Education Policy Panel on Mid-Day Meals, Health and Well-being chaired by the head of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences recently stated "Given the small body frame of Indians, any extra energy provided through cholesterol by regular consumption of egg and meat leads to lifestyle disorders." The report says animal based foods can interfere with hormonal changes in humans that lead to obesity, diabetes and primary infertility. It is also against high amounts of sugar and salt being given to kids. A *satvik* diet is recommended since it is known to be good for the mind and helps attain emotional stability.

BWC has continuously sent objections to state governments about serving eggs in Mid-Day meals. Poultry farming, including egg production is the breeding of birds for profit and involves cruelty to and killing of chickens. Introducing eggs and flesh to school children, especially those whose religion and culture forbids their consumption, is unethical.

The supply of eggs far exceeds demand and therefore they are being hawked to state governments who utilise them in Mid-Day meals.

BWC has suggested to ISKCON's Akshaya Patra Foundation, an NGO that supplies 18 lakh children with freshly cooked pure vegetarian meals from their 65 kitchens across 14 States and 2 UTs, to consider adding 25 grams of pistachios since they have the same amount of protein as that of an egg and also provide more than 30 different vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Since costly, pistachios need not be given daily. Banana, one of the healthiest and cheapest of fruits, could be included on other days.

Banganga Tank Fish Saved



Banganga Tank on 25.09.2022. Photo courtesy: Bijal Kara

Every year thousands of fish were found floating in the Banganga Tank, Mumbai on the last day of Pitru Paksha, so this year BWC decided to write to the Trustees of the Goud Saraswat Brahman Temple Trust, Shree Balaji Ramji Mandir, Bhuleshwar, telling them that it was their duty to ensure that the fish in the Banganga Tank did not die.

Sign boards appealing to people had obviously not worked so it was essential for the tank to be first cleaned and stagnant water removed, employ efficient and a sufficient number of security guards to ensure that *pind* is not immersed into the water but only dipped and put in *handis*, and employ persons to physically remove at the end of each day any food that may be left in the water tank.

A copy of our letter was sent to the Commissioner, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) requesting them to help solve this serious problem by taking necessary action to ensure that dead fish are not found floating in the Banganga Tank again.

On behalf of BWC, Bijal & Hiren Kara visited the Banganga Tank and found many security guards on duty. They did not see any dead fish, but flowers on the surface of the water, and several ducks at the far end of the tank.

A few days later BWC was happy to receive a letter from the BMC stating that no fish had died because "dewatering pumps were installed for aeration purpose".



Diana Ratnagar
Chairperson

A View on Animal Sacrifice

Sacrifices were probably conducted as cannibalistic feasts that evolved into rituals says Amit Chaudhery

"Cruelty to animals is one of the most significant vices of a low and ignoble people. Wherever one notices them, they constitute a sign of ignorance and brutality which cannot be painted over even by all the evidence of wealth and luxury." – Alexander von Humboldt

What lies behind us and what lies before us, are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. It is a very wide swing indeed. We should, however get some things out of the way. Let's get the clinical, dictionary and anthropological connotations of animal sacrifice out of the way. In its mindless, insensate and barbaric perpetuation of terrible suffering on animals, animal sacrifices are really nothing more than a socio-religious construct which has far reaching negative impact and which is actually a well organized network of violence, criminality and ecocide. The blood-letting of animals at an altar and the Latin word sacrificium, meaning "to make holy," establish the link between blood and an opening to the sacred. Over time it found its way into hardened, bigoted, unreasonable and evil practices which permeated religion as we know it. Some religions abhorred and shunned the reprehensible animal sacrifice (Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism), some marginalized it (Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism), some mainstreamed it (Islam, Judaism). Irony is that the gods and books these religions subscribe to do not necessitate the macabre slughter of animals. This point is obscured by the religio-cultural aspect which is nothing more than power levers, economics and in cases violent assertion of identity. Religion is considered a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and world views that ostensibly relate humanity to spirituality and,



Women biting live chickens to death. Took place in an unidentified temple Karimnagar district in Telangana.

sometimes, to moral values. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions and sacred histories intended to give meaning to life or to explain the origin of life or the universe. In every case, almost entirely and without exception, these propositions are archaic and rest in belief. Always obstinate, beliefs appear impossible to alter.

Sacrifices were probably conducted as cannibalistic feasts that evolved into rituals. Humans sacrificed one another, as a means of atonement, and to secure a continued association with the departed person. Animal sacrifices began with firstlings, young animals offered to the sacred in gratitude. It was a form of thanksgiving where domesticated farm animals were sacrificed and placed on an

altar along with other uncooked foods. The act of animal sacrifice in these belief systems is essentially a synonym for a gift meant to evoke a sacred relationship. Animal sacrifice has been described as a means to bribe or propitiate either cosmic entities or a supreme being. In other words, some have interpreted this ritual practice as a bribe, a business transaction, without moral significance, intended to influence non-discernible entities. Animal sacrifices are categorized into four types of offerings: praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and expiation. A sacrifice of praise expresses homage and involves the veneration of a religious relationship with the sacred. Thanksgiving rituals of sacrifice are conducted because a favour has been granted, such as the birth of a child. The more complicated form of sacrifice is that of supplication because it requires pleading for a specific request through a direct link established with the sacred. This link is intended to help establish protection over a community or individual. Just as important for supplicants are sacrifices to forestall the anger of the god(s). Other animal sacrifices are intended as expiation, where there is a moral fault on the part of the person performing the sacrifice, who intends to placate animist entities that will help the person re-establish a connection with the sacred. Substitution of animals for humans in sacrifices can be said to have occurred in some form in the history of most ancient societies.

Animal Agriculture

Naturally, all sacrificial animals must first be raised to be abused and killed. Animal agriculture is responsible for 51% of all greenhouse gas emissions – more than the global transportation industry combined. It is also:

- The leading cause of species extinction
- The leading cause of ocean dead zones
- The leading cause of habitat destruction
- The leading cause of water pollution

Ocean dead zones are perhaps one of the most disturbing. This occurs when so much animal excrement and toxins (mainly from factory farms for sacrifices and daily meat) are dumped by the billions of pounds into the seas. They vanquish all life in the area by depleting oxygen rendering them uninhabitable for marine life. As such, once flourishing ecosystems become “dead zones”. No more naturally landscaped corals, no more darting schools of fish, no more gliding rays or turtles: it’s a desolate, eerie underwater grave. Clearly, the practice of killing animals (and I am taking an overall view, not only sacrifice) raises questions which are at once ethical, moral, religious, cultural, legal and environmentally sustainable. It presents impact on society and on the environment. Slaughterhouses outstrip any descriptors of fire and brimstone Hell. Dozens of animals are lined up, and killed with blunt blades in the intensely cruel practice of halal and take several minutes to die. It takes several hours to wait your turn in full sight of others being dragged, punched, and ripped open as many men hold you down after tying your limbs together and sitting on you.

“Sacrifice”?

Contrast this with the fact that sacrificing means giving up something that is truly precious to you — not an animal that you just buy. Distractions lie in the fact that we are beguiled by extraordinary and popular delusions. People, all of them, are imitative and gregarious. Popular delusions began so very early and have stayed so long that nothing shall suffice to detail their history. Among the greatest malaises of our dark hankering time



A man dancing with a live goat in his mouth is from Madhapur, Hyderabad city. These men dress as *Potharaju* with a typical garb and a whip. They tear out strips of flesh from the goat's throat until the goat dies. These *potharajus* are professional goat murderers who are hired for these festivals all over Telangana State. (top left) Goat sacrifice in Jagityal district. (other three) Photos courtesy: Gautam Adulapuram

All these events take place with mandatory police permission and under police supervision. They refuse to file FIRs. Jagityal police seized phones and beat up Citizens for Animals activist Prithvi even after we informed the police that he had a recent cardiac stent in place. They always intimidate male activists. When pushed, police file bogus FIRs so that they can be closed at their convenience.

Buffalo sacrifices are common also. Sometimes about 30 to 40 buffaloes are sacrificed on the same day in front of hundreds of villagers. The buffalo feet and heads are buried at the site of sacrifice as part of the ritual.

Burying bulls and male buffaloes alive is another form of animal sacrifice. Villages in Telangana have their own bi or tri annual calendars for these events.

are religious manias. Their manifestations and growth are encountered very consistently. The great mass madness: the world is a duel. Duellers in growing numbers are imbued by the belief that some God will nerve the arm of the combatant whose cause is just. And will grant him victory. A natural belief among those freshly emerged from barbarism. A permanent debasement actually, in the move from devotion to the gods, to the mechanics and rituals of sacrifice is a warped approach

where killing of animals operates by its own spontaneous energy. No place for sentiment, sensitivity or compassion – except faith in the potency of the sacrifice itself. No moral or judicious or fair considerations – except the legitimization of any sin, individual or collective by the fear, trembling, screaming, writhing of hapless and helpless animals. Away from prayers, barter, or bargaining, these gods are symbolically coerced by the ritual of sacrifice. What terrible, diabolical

gods are invoked and placated by such horrid institutionalized circles of evil visited upon animals and consecrated by “sacrifice”?

One should not forget the force of religion is extremely strong in society. The tide of moral sentiment slowly turns, painfully slowly. It starts in the sub-conscious mind when we feel that while not clearly opposed to it, we have begun to feel uncomfortable about it. “In a drop of rain can be seen the colours of the sun” observed the historian Lewis Namier. In every act of kindness we actually hold in our hands the mercy of whatever gods we believe in and whatever value system or purpose of life we subscribe to. I believe there must be, has to be and one day shall be dignity, beauty, love and hope for every living creature. This can happen only when we turn ourselves towards the light of that only thing which matters, the only things which holds any meaning: compassion. From compassion flows every worthwhile aspect of life, the sense of justice and fairness first and most of all.

Petitions filed in the Telugu States so far:

- PIL 136 of 2021 against camel sacrifices in Telangana
- PIL 247 of 2022 in Andhra Pradesh against animal sacrifices
- WP 16332 in 2019 in Andhra Pradesh against sacrifices in Nellore jatara
- Preparing to file against animal sacrifices in Telangana High Court this year



Amit Chaudhery is a naturalist and founder steward of Earth Quotient, a viral group engaged in unpopular causes associated with crimes against Nature. He is also a life member of BWC-India

Symbolic Bali

BWC feels that condoning barbaric animal sacrifices can restart human sacrifices and violence among humans because basic reverence for life is missing: in October 2022 two women were sacrificed in Kerala.

Reforms beginning in the 15th century have evolved into symbolic *bali* or sacrifices but only in a few temples of the country: rice, *til*, coconuts, betel nuts, bananas, sugarcane and white pumpkins have become substitutes for lambs, goats, bulls, and chickens.

Unlike other *Kali* temples, animals are not allowed to be sacrificed at the Sri Ramakrishna Dakshineswar *Kali* Temple, near Kolkata. A short documentary entitled *No More Blood Shed* has been viewed nearly 36,000 times on YouTube.

At the *Kamakhya Devi* Temple near Guwahati in Assam, one of the most venerated *Durga/Shakti* shrines in India, for the past few years a group of *tantriks* have on *Durga Ashtami* been “sacrificing” effigies made of flour.

On *Mahashtami* Day goats, lambs and cocks were sacrificed at a *Durga* temple in Sirlo, Odisha till 1985 when animal sacrifices were stopped at the *Kataka Chandi* and *Sarala* temples in the area.

At the Bhadrakali shrine in Odisha also vegetables such as white pumpkin and cucumber are “sacrificed” – not animals.

Starting Navratri 2022, the *Maa Durga* Temple Pushpalata Ghosh Charitable Trust that manages Bihar’s Begusarai *Durga* Temple abolished the 700-year-old tradition of animal sacrifice. Instead of about 10,000 animals that were being sacrificed every year after the devotees’ wishes were said to have come true, devotees would henceforth “sacrifice” vegetables and fruits like pumpkin and sugarcane for Goddess Vaishnavi.

Smuggling Out and Smuggling In

Some animals and birds have been sent back from Chennai airport to the country from which they came, but they are few and far between says Khurshid Bhatena

Wild life (live and as products) is being smuggled not only out of, but also in to and via India. It is quite difficult to track down illegal wildlife trade because of various innovative forms of secrecy employed by sellers and buyers on the internet.

Using airlines to illegally transport wildlife happens frequently in India although several known and round-about land routes are used to smuggle. But, we only hear of it when consignments are seized, not when they go undetected so there is no saying as to how many actually reach their destinations and if dead or alive on arrival.

When wildlife being smuggled out is confiscated, the animals are usually sent to a nearby zoo or safari park. However, some star tortoises have been released in the river from which they were captured.

Similarly when animals or birds coming into India are seized, they are sent to live in captivity and are displayed for the rest of their lives like the bald eagle (the national bird of USA) caged at the Alipure zoo in Kolkata.

So much so that in August 2022 the Assam zoo was awaiting permission to showcase all the exotic species in their care such as turtles, Aldabra giant tortoises, blue & hyacinth macaws, silvery marmosets, kangaroo, joeys, wallaby, golden headed lion tamarin, capuchin monkeys, chimpanzees and other primates, as tourist attractions. They already have a giraffe, binturong and few hippopotamus being displayed.

An insignificant number have been returned to the countries of origin to be rewilded or released back into their natural habitat resulting in disastrous global environmental consequences.

In fact, zoos have purchased successfully smuggled in to India animals or birds accompanied with fake papers saying they were captive born within the country.

Many of the successfully smuggled creatures are also sold at exorbitant rates to people to satisfy their growing craze to keep exotic pets. They cost lakhs of rupees and are flaunted on social media like kangaroos seen hopping in videos taken in West Bengal. Unfortunately, there is no law against possession, trade and breeding of exotic animals.

Sent Out

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) stated that during 2020-21 the most seized living wildlife and products was ivory, turtles and star tortoises. There was a decline in rhino horn, but not of pangolin scales or tiger skins and other body parts.

In fact, 60% of the illegal trade from India comprised of tortoises and freshwater turtles with star tortoises being nearly half the trade. Unsurprisingly in August 2022, a Thai Airways flyer to Bangkok was arrested with 60 star tortoises at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. They had been stuffed into a check-in bag but luckily none were found dead. Typically they were handed over to the Bannerghatta zoo.

The Illegal Trade of Marine Species in India 2015-2021 Report by the Wildlife Conservation Society states 120 sea cucumbers, 18 sea fans (a variety of coral), 16 seahorse & pipefish, and 16 seashells, corals & calcareous sponge marine wildlife and 36 ambergris seizures were registered during this 7 year period. They were being smuggled to China, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Dubai.

In 2017 the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau with the help of some NGOs who did undercover

investigations, caught traders of *hatha-jodi* (claimed to be the root of a plant, but actually the dried penis of a monitor lizard) saying it imparted good luck and mystical powers on the libido. Male lizards having hemi penis are captured from the wild. The area around the living lizard's penis is burnt so it protrudes. It is then excised with a sharp knife and sun-dried. It resembles joined hands hence called *hatha-jodi*. In 2021 Traffic-WWF announced that "buying was stealing" with the demand for *hatha-jodi* having resulted in an increase in poaching and illegal trade in monitor lizards, so much so that the survival of the 4 species found in India was at stake.

Brought In

Following a May 2022 article by BBC entitled "Why are Kangaroos being spotted in India?" BWC wrote to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change strongly suggesting that all confiscated animals and birds that had been smuggled in to India should not be displayed in safari parks, zoos or elsewhere because if they are, it helps the smugglers in continuing their illegal activities. Such animals and birds should instead be immediately sent back to their country of origin, more so if they are listed under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) of which India is a signatory since 1976.

As foreign exotic species do not fall within the purview of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, it makes it easier to smuggle in, keep and display such animals, reptiles and birds. Although they may enter India illegally via neighbouring countries like Thailand, Malaysia

Exotic Pets



The demand to keep exotic creatures as status symbols is mean and cruel. Wild animals, birds and reptiles are smuggled in to India and illegally sold.



The creatures undergo extreme suffering and some are found dead on arrival. Buying to save is not a solution because it encourages the exotic pet trade.

Condemn those who keep exotic creatures.

and through porous borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal, the species are usually natives of South East Asia, Indonesia, Maldives, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Africa, Europe, North or South America.

Some animals and birds have been sent back from Chennai airport to the country from which they came, but they are few and far between.

There was an attempt in October 2019 to smuggle 7 healthy reptiles (1 green tree python, 1 scrub python and 5 endangered species of lizards) from Malaysia into India. The Indian Customs officials at Chennai discovered them with two passengers and decided to send the reptiles back to Kuala Lumpur. But in October 2022 the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex Customs cleared a big consignment from Malaysia. The DRI took the number of the vehicle and intercepted it on Vile Parle flyover. They found 665 (548 alive and 117 dead) pythons, lizards, turtles and iguanas smuggled in 13 cartons. The consignment also consisted of 16 cartons of ornamental fish.

In January 2020 Indian Customs at Chennai arrested 3 persons with 2 marmosets, 3 rodents (1 dead), 2 squirrels and 12 iguanas, and seized and returned them to Bangkok.

In August 2022 a passenger who had flown to Bangkok and returned with live animals was intercepted by Customs officials at Chennai airport. The officials decided to deport back to Bangkok the 15 King snakes, 5 Ball pythons, 2 Aldabra tortoises and 1 De Brazza monkey. Two months later they arrested another passenger from Bangkok with 5 Common-spotted Cuscus in his check-in baggage, and deported the animals back to Thailand although they originated from New Guinea.

Introducing foreign species in the Wild not advisable

Earlier this year consignments consisting of as many as 400 exotic animals in cages were seized on the Myanmar border in Mizoram. They included three-toed sloths, beavers, snakes, rare lizards, and pottos (primates).

It is but obvious that wildlife trafficking has become a big international racket involving poachers, smugglers, traders and buyers. The crooks shifted to dealing in foreign species since it was easier to smuggle them into India as compared to poaching and smuggling India's wildlife out of the country.

Some may think why not introduce the confiscated exotic animals into the wild here in India just like the eight wild-caught Cheetahs from Namibia that were introduced by the government in Kuno National Park in September 2022. (That the focus was on their arrival and release with no consideration for the prey – hundreds of spotted deer also introduced in the area for them to kill and eat – is another sad story.)

Wildlife needs to live in their native habitat to flourish and benefit the ecosystem. It is inadvisable to introduce seized wildlife in our forests or in zoos to attract visitors.

They can become an invasive species like the nocturnal Giant African snails that extensively damage crops, plants, even concrete structures, and have spread like wild fire from Kerala to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Under the voluntary disclosure scheme announced in June 2020 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (Government of India) 32,645 Indians declared being in possession of exotic live species such as critically endangered lemurs, iguanas, macaws and kangaroos.

The craze for exotic creatures has given rise to fraudsters. For example, in October 2022 a man made an outstation deal to purchase 2 macaws for ₹ 2.40 lakh and gave an online advance of ₹ 1 lakh. Weeks later when he received no birds and the man who was paid stopped answering his calls he realised he had been cheated.

For those who do not care about the cruelty aspects of keeping these foreign exotic animals and birds as pets, let it be known that the creatures carry the risk of zoonotic disease outbreaks.

If there is no demand for exotic wildlife the illegal trafficking will end.



Khurshid Bhatena is a Trustee and Honorary Secretary of BWC-India

Reproduced below is an abridged version of a British study which is an eye-opener for those who may not realise that their surgical or medical treatment anywhere in the world could contain animal derived substances. Recently one of our vegan members was extremely upset when to her horror she got to know that her dentist had used animal bone (very likely cow bone because imported into India) for grafting and silk sutures (instead of an alternative) for the procedure. Unfortunately, the dentist did not think it essential to inform the patient that there were non-animal origin alternatives available which could have easily been utilised instead of the animal bone graft that had been used.

Animal Derived Constituents not Disclosed by Doctors

Doctors should not presume patients are uninterested but rather ascertain if the use of animal-derived constituents is an issue for them say Daniel Rodge and Bruce P Blackshaw

Animal-derived constituents are frequently used in anaesthesia and surgery, and patients are seldom informed of this. This is problematic for a growing number of patients who may have religious or ethical concerns about their use. It is not currently a common practice to inform patients about the use of animal-derived constituents, yet what little empirical data does exist indicates that many patients want the opportunity to give their informed consent.

Although there exist systemic and practical challenges to implementing this in practice, the ethical case for doing so is strong.

Patients with certain religious or ethical beliefs may express concerns about the use of animal-derived constituents, and in some cases, this can result in a patient refusing certain kinds of treatment.

The number of individuals who might object to the use of animal-derived products used in healthcare is growing rapidly. This raises some significant ethical and practical issues for doctors, the most pertinent being deciding what information should or should not be disclosed to patients about the products being used to treat them.

Doctors must communicate relevant information to a patient, even if its disclosure could lead the patient to make a choice that may not be in their best interest. Patients are entitled to make decisions that a doctor disagrees with.

In 2017, the Vegan Society sent a letter to the UK's Secretary of State for Health, detailing their concerns about the use of animal-derived constituents in healthcare, and the current lack of transparency on the labelling of medicines. Understandably, the growing number of vegetarians and vegans want to know if the drugs they might be prescribed contain animal-derived constituents. Individuals are increasingly restricting their consumption and use of animal-derived products for a number of reasons: health benefits, environmental concerns, ethical reasons such as promoting animal rights, and objections to the intentional killing of animals that have been experimented upon. There is also a sizeable population who object to the use of porcine and bovine constituents for religious reasons.

The increase in the number of individuals who might be concerned about the use of animal-derived constituents indicates that this is an issue healthcare professionals can no longer afford to ignore.

Patients' Right to Know and Decide

A number of products used in anaesthesia and surgery contain animal-derived constituents that some patients may object to, were they to know. What is particularly problematic is that patients who may have concerns are rarely informed that some of the products utilised in their care may contain animal-derived constituents. These include a number of anaesthetic drugs, surgical implants and dressings.

The most commonly used induction agent in anaesthesia, Propofol contains purified egg phosphatide. But there is a formulation of Propofol called Cleofol, which is manufactured in India and does not contain any egg phosphatide or other animal-derived constituents.

Hydrocolloid dressings can contain porcine-derived gelatine and are routinely used for a number of different types of hip and knee surgery.

There are also a number of surgical products or implants that could also be objectionable to a number of patients. They frequently use ingredients from porcine or bovine sources. Biopolymer sutures can also contain animal-derived constituents, including those from ovine and bovine sources.

In principle, it does not seem unreasonable that patients should be informed about the use of animal-derived products. It seems inconsistent to respect patient's religious or ethical dietary choices and then use products that many of them may feel as strongly about.

Acknowledging a patient's right to make choices based on their personal values and beliefs, the paradigmatic example being obtaining their informed consent before treatment.

It seems reasonable to inform patients of the use of animal-derived products in their treatment. Some patients could be harmed by being treated with animal-derived products if they have strong moral or religious concerns

and they later learn this has occurred. If a doctor, for instance, knows that their patient is Hindu, Muslim or vegan and fails to disclose the use of known animal-derived products, they may be disrespecting their patient's autonomy. Doctors should not presume patients are uninterested but rather ascertain if the use of animal-derived constituents is an issue for them.

Psychological Harm

Patients who may be concerned about the use of animal-derived products may consider that they have been psychologically harmed by not having that information disclosed, and later learning they have been treated with animal-derived products without their consent. A doctor cannot presume any resulting psychological harms would be trivial.

Potential harm from the patient's refusal to accept treatment does not, however, seem sufficient grounds to trump the combination of respect for patient autonomy and the potential of later psychological harm. Failure to disclose the information on the basis that the patient may make a decision that may not be in their interest is unacceptable because they are entitled to refuse treatment if they believe that doing so would harm them.

In instances where a patient still refuses treatment because of unavoidable animal-derived constituents, the patient's wishes must be respected.

We can grant a prima facie obligation to provide groups with certain religious or ethical convictions about animal-derived products with alternative products so they can receive equivalent care.

Alternatives

Some synthetic alternatives may have greater efficacy than their equivalent. This may mean that those patients with religious and ethical convictions about the use of animal-derived constituents may receive more effective treatment than most patients.

What are the implications for disclosure? If, as a matter of policy, all doctors were required to disclose the use of animal-derived products to their patients, demand for alternatives would increase and ultimately costs of these alternatives should decrease. In many instances, synthetic alternatives could gradually replace certain animal-derived products for all patients.

Very few doctors know whether or not the drugs, surgical products and dressings they use contain any animal-derived constituents.

A long-term solution would be to eliminate all animal-derived constituents from all drugs and medical products.

The use of animal derived constituents in anaesthesia and surgery is of increasing interest

for a growing minority of patients, many of whom have religious or secular concerns about their use. Many of them believe that they should be given the opportunity to provide informed consent. Doctors should expect to be increasingly confronted by patients who wish to know if any products used in their care contain animal-derived constituents, and whether they can be avoided.

Our analysis strongly supports the contention that informed consent should be gained from patients when animal-derived constituents will be used, and that alternatives should be sought where available and practicable.



Daniel Rodge and Bruce P Blackshaw
 Courtesy: BMC Medical Ethics

Fireworks Work up Death and Fear

Birds are not the only species threatened by our fireworks, all wild and domestic animals are equally at risk says Rea Meher Chaudhuri Marboeuf

I must start by admitting I was always fascinated by fireworks. I thought they were a mesmerizing experience that seemed to bring about a child-like wonder for all. I was wrong.

Even being someone who has always cared for animals, I had ignorantly overlooked the impact they have on them. It was only recently that, as I sat to enjoy the lights in the sky, it sparked a different feeling inside me. I felt fireworks go off in my gut as I watched them shoot into the night sky. It was the first time I genuinely wondered, not as a child watching a fireworks display but as a responsible adult who understands the importance of awareness and my actions.

What was the cost for these fleeting moments of entertainment? I went back inside, away from it all, to check on my pet cat. Usually a mischievous and confident cat, she was but a meek version of herself hiding and shaking under the bed.

The memories came back from when I was a child, and my dog had run away from home the first time she heard the sound of fireworks. We were lucky to have found her a few days later. How could I have gone this long without facing the facts? After some research, I realized the cost of our amusement gets paid by the lives of innocent creatures.

Celebrating Death?

Firecrackers have been a part of human celebrations since around 200 BC, but it's about time they became a thing of the past. Hundreds of birds were found dead on the ground in Rome after a New Year celebration in 2021. Fireworks were assumed to be the cause of these deaths. That's not the first time something of this gravity had happened. In 2011, in a town in Arkansas, more than 3000 blackbirds fell to their death on New Year's Eve, and scientists believe fireworks were the cause. Even if there is no direct impact on birds from the firecrackers, the sound levels are so high that it can cause them to go deaf, fly away in



In 2020 a pregnant elephant cow swallowed a pineapple filled with firecrackers and died after suffering for many days. Photo courtesy: tourmyindia.com

panic, crash into buildings and each other, break their beaks and lead to their death. Others fly away and get lost, never to return to their nests, abandoning their young.

Birds are not the only species threatened by our fireworks, all wild and domestic animals are equally at risk.

Many wild animals accidentally eat or feed their young, the toxic litter caused by firecrackers. They also get exposed to toxic fumes that they inhale and can develop diseases.

Horses get so perturbed by the noise that they try to jump fences and can get impaled. Others run out onto roads and can get hit by cars.

There were 103 recorded deaths from firecrackers of dogs, cats, pigeons, kites, and owls during Diwali in 2017. Some salvation made, that number dropped to 81 by 2018 and 47 by 2019, thanks to spreading awareness and implementing bans on firecrackers.

There is still hope and the ability to create a positive change. Although Delhi (as also Patna, Muzaffarpur, Gaya and Jammu) banned the production, sale, and use of even “green” firecrackers until January 1, 2023, during Diwali 2022 it was not abided by in toto. Hopefully, such bans will be turned permanent and implemented.

Overall, fireworks kill and cause high levels of stress for all animals. No celebration should be the cause of death for other life. I would never be able to watch a firework display in the same light as before, and I won't miss it.

After all, we are now in 2022, and we have drone light shows that are much nicer to watch, which is a good practice of beauty without cruelty.



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Do watch



Diwali | A Short Film by VINISHA Vision on YouTube: youtu.be/0aNo-D2_3_4

Vegan Recipe *Spinach*

Spinach is a very nutrient-dense food – low in calories, high in vitamins and minerals. It is a good source of Vitamins A, B2, B6, B12, C, D, E and K plus magnesium, folate, manganese, iron, calcium, potassium, protein, phosphorus, zinc, copper, fibre, selenium, folate, zinc, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and Omega 3 fatty acids. Its consumption can relieve constipation and it is highly rated for treating and preventing anaemia.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (USA)'s list of nutrient-dense vegetables and fruits based on 17 nutrients, spinach contains 83.43% which makes it a powerhouse food that reduces disease risk.

The Live Organic Information website recommends choosing the master amino acid pattern over meat since vegan protein is easier on the body. They have listed spinach (49%) first amongst the top 10 sources of protein.

In India spinach is considered a super food. There are scores of varieties and they are called by different names in different parts of the country.

Sarson ka Saag

Ingredients

4 cups packed mustard greens/*sarson*, chopped

2 cups packed spinach/*palak* leaves, chopped

2 cups *bathua* leaves, chopped
(if unavailable increase *palak* by 2 cups)

¼ cup maize/*makke* flour

4 tablespoons mustard oil

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon turmeric

1 tablespoon ginger, finely shredded

2 green chillies, chopped (more or less)

3 tablespoons jaggery/*gur* powder

For seasoning/*tadka*:

2 tablespoons mustard oil

½ teaspoon cumin seeds/*jeera*

2 whole dry red chillies

few cloves garlic

1 pinch asafoetida/*hing*



Preparation

Mix maize flour with ½ cup of water and set aside.

In a heavy bottom pan, boil the mustard greens and other spinach leaves, mustard oil, salt, turmeric, ginger, and green chillies along with a cup of water.

When it begins to boil, cover pan and turn down heat to medium.

Cook for 30 minutes till mushy stirring thrice in-between.

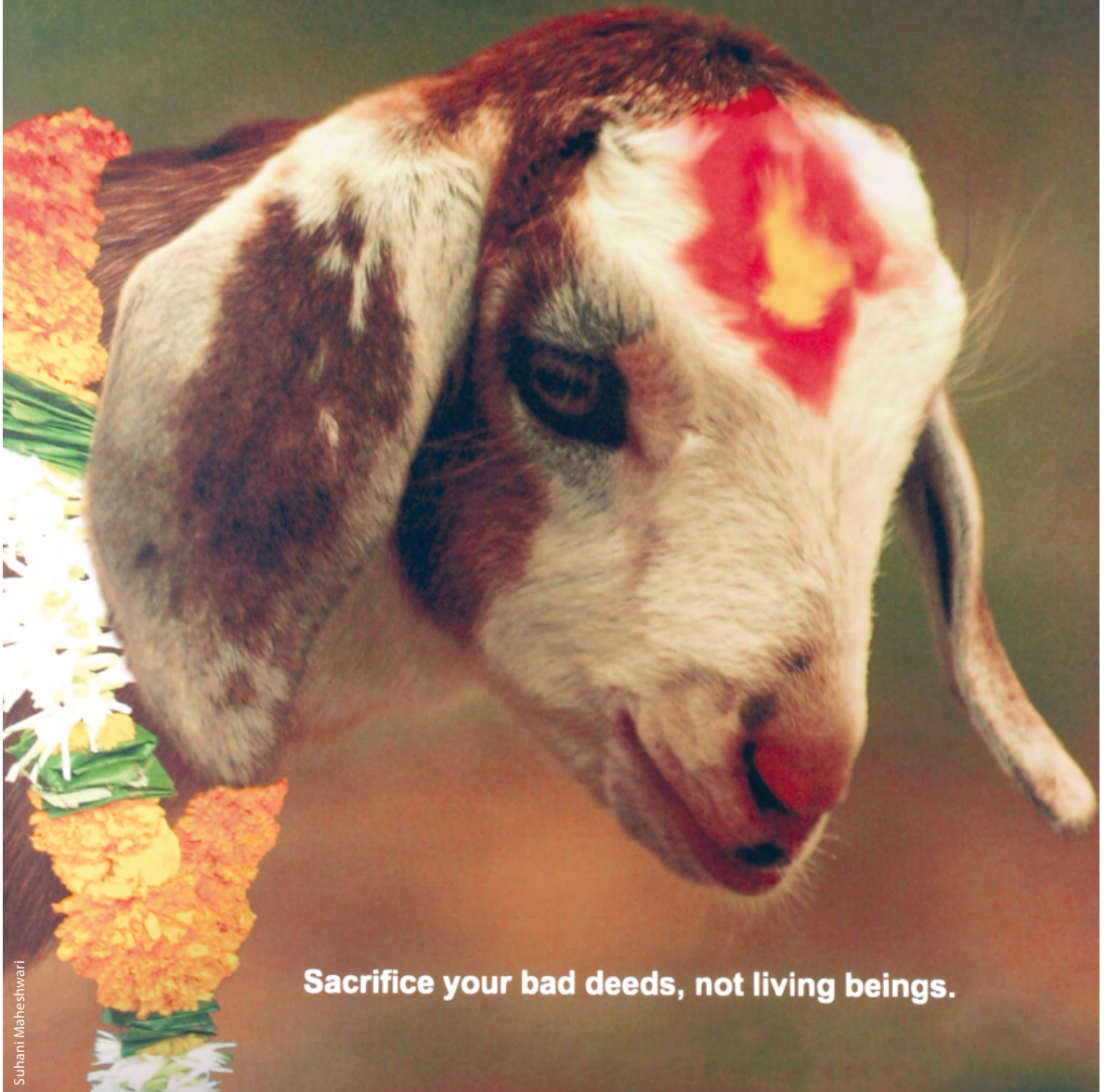
Add maize mixture and jaggery. Mix well and let it simmer for 20 minutes till nicely integrated.

Prepare seasoning/*tadka* and pour over *saag*.

Serve with *makke ki roti*.

Do visit www.bwcindia.org/Web/Recipes/Recipesindex.html for an assortment of Beauty Without Cruelty's tested and tasted, healthy and delicious vegan recipes.

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Suhani Maheshwari

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