

Interfaith Vegan Coalition

JAIN ADVOCACY KIT



Demonstrating the Jain Ideals of Harmlessness and Universal Lovingkindness

BACKGROUND ON AHIMSA AND JAIN VEGETARIANISM

Jainism is a tradition in which the utmost ethical principle is ahimsa, that is, non-violence. In practice, vegetarianism has been the moral baseline for the community. Jain vegetarianism excludes meat, eggs, fish and seafood. The traditional Jain diet even excludes certain forms of plant life, the root vegetables. Jainism does not rely on textual authority but there is a body of written teachings, prayers and songs in which it is consistently communicated that human beings have no right to take the life of other living beings. The Jain community understands that all lives are interdependent and that we should do the least harm in our consumption.

Though dairy has traditionally been included in the Jain diet, an increasing number of Jains have recognized veganism as the necessary extension of ahimsa into our modern world, and there are plenty of resources addressing the nexus of Jainism and veganism. Because of Jainism's uncompromising stance on vegetarianism, vegan activists in the Jain community have not needed to convince Jains not to eat meat and thus focused mostly on dairy and to a lesser extent on eggs.

Extension of Jain temple practices

Traditionally Jains do not wear leather into the temples. Silk is also discouraged. Some Jains have bought non-leather belts to give away so that no one has to wear leather belts in their life at all. Jain children have performed cultural shows illustrating the ways in which silk, leather and dairy harm animals with the moral that Jains should avoid them completely.



STORIES

Stories of the protection of animals by humans and avoidance of violence abound in the Jain tradition. One example is below.

One story best expresses the Jain attitude toward animals. Once Neminath, a young prince, arriving as a bridegroom with his marriage entourage to the house of his bride, saw near the house an enclosure of animals, tightly packed, waiting to be slaughtered. Shocked by the cry of the animals, the prince enquired, “Why are those animals being kept in such cruel conditions?” His aides replied, “They are for the feast of the wedding party.”



The young prince was overwhelmed with compassion. Arriving at the wedding chamber, he spoke with the father of the princess. “Immediately and unconditionally all those animals enclosed to be slaughtered for the marriage feast must be freed,” he said. “Why?” responded the father.

“The lives of animals are there for the pleasure of humans. Animals are our slaves and our meat. How can there be any feast without the flesh?!”

Prince Neminath was puzzled. He could not believe what he had just heard. He exclaimed, “Animals have souls, they have consciousness, they are our kith and kin, they are our ancestors. They wish to live as much as we do; they have feelings and emotions. They have love and passion; they fear death as much as we do. Their instinct for life is no less than ours. Their right to live is as fundamental as our own. I cannot marry, I cannot love and I cannot enjoy life if animals are enslaved and killed.” Without further ado he rejected the plans for his marriage, he discarded the comfortable life of a prince, and he responded to his inner calling to go out and awaken the sleepy masses who had been conditioned to think selfishly and kill animals for their pleasure and comfort.

Story extract, (with name changed to Neminath for consistency with other Jain literature), from the [article](#) Jain Religion by Satish Kumar.

BOOKS RELATED TO JAIN VEGANISM

[The Book of Compassion](#)

[An Ahimsa Crisis](#)

[Rainbow Food for the Vegan Palate](#) (Jain vegan cookbook) and also available through Amazon.

VIDEOS--MODERN JAIN TEACHERS SPEAKING ABOUT VEGANISM

The first [link](#) below shows an interview with Jain Muni Ji Shri Vihar Sagarji Maharaj, one of the only monks who has spoken in favor of veganism in India and the next two are highly respected Jain teachers, [Gurudev](#) and [Pramodaben Chitrabhanu](#) who teach in the US and India.

“[A Prayer for Compassion](#)” film by Thomas Jackson.



PRAYERS

Traditional prayers and songs are in the ancient Indian languages of Sanskrit and related Prakrit and modern Indian languages such as Hindi and Gujarati. The English translations for some of the prayers are shown here and some are from a wonderful book called *To Light One Candle, Universal Prayers for Peace* by Clare Rosenfeld and Pramodaben Chitrabhanu, with Jain, Hindu and Buddhist prayers. Please see other sites (such as [jainlibrary.org](#) and [jainworld.com](#)) for transliterations and quotes in the original script.

One should not injure, subjugate, enslave, torture, or kill any living being including animals, plants,

or insects — Respect for all living beings is Non-Violence. – *Āchārāṅga Sutra* – *Bhagawān Mahāvira*.

There are five acts or deeds, which should be known and avoided. They are:

- Tying animals where it could hurt them, or putting them in cages where there is no freedom
- Beating them with sticks or any other means
- Piercing their nose, ear, or amputating limbs or any part of the body
- Making them carry a heavy load
- Depriving them of food and shelter

–*Pratikraman Sutra*, Lesson 7 on Non-violence

All living beings are souls, alive and conscious, just like me. As I like to be happy and do not like to be in pain, all living beings like to be happy and do not like to be in pain. By keeping this insight at the core of my being, I will not cause any harm, pain or loss of life to any living being. Jain Yogasastra, Hemachandracharya.

O Victorious ones who have become masters of yourselves, What wonderful teaching you have given us! You have taught us how to nourish the body with only that food which issues straight from the benevolent earth, which is not tainted with the pain of bloodshed. You have taught us why we eat- to sustain the body in health so as to use it to attain liberation and to serve our fellow beings.

Jain Pratikraman Sutra-Sadhu Kriya

A commonly sung prayer related to forgiveness is called *Khamemi Savve Jiva*

***Khamemi Savve Jiva
Savve Jiva Khamantu Me
Metti Me Savve Bhuyesu
Veram Majjam ne Kenai***

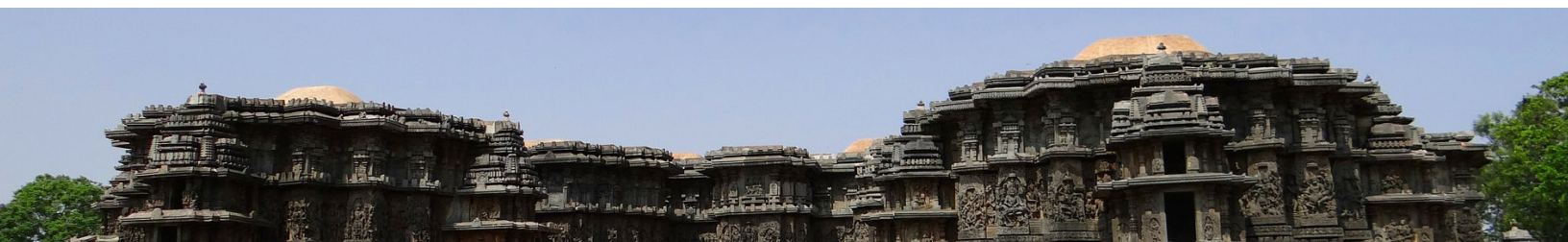
I forgive all living beings; may all living beings forgive me. I am a friend to all life; I bear no ill will against anyone.

Pratikraman Sutra (Vanditu)



RITUALS, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES

- Some sects of Jains perform puja rituals similar in appearance to Hindu pujas. Vegans in these traditions advocate using oil or water in place of ghee or milk, and replacing dairy containing sweets with vegan ones.
- Education about veganism has begun to be incorporated into children's temple studies (pathshala), the annual festival of forgiveness (paryushan), temple anniversaries and other holy days.
- Workshops and camps in Canada focused on ahimsa with eco-vegan [themes](#).
- In the US, the Young Jains of America have initiated jaap, repeated recitation of prayers in honor of the animals on Thanksgiving Day.
- Vegan Day has been celebrated for several years in Jain centers across the US on Oct 2, with speakers and all vegan meals.
- Conventions in the US and UK, such as Young Jains, JAINA, Young Jains of America have featured many vegan speakers and some have served all vegan food.
- All vegan meals at temples: Two UK based Jain organizations have decided to serve only vegan meals at all public functions. All major US Jain organizations offer vegan options at meals,



which are usually lacto-vegetarian. A growing number of Jain vegans are advocating for only vegan meals to be served in temples (and in addition to eliminate plastic and styrofoam which harm animals via their harm to the environment).

- Animal sanctuaries: Jains have supported animal sanctuaries in India, and though many of them support cows, there are Jain-run sanctuaries for all dogs, birds and other animals in cities such as Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India and a bird hospital in Delhi. Jains in the US have increasingly been visiting and supporting local sanctuaries that also educate visitors about veganism. One Jain couple Shaleen and Shilpi Shah have established a sanctuary in Colorado, called Luvin' Arms.



KEY WEBSITES AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES RELATED TO VEGANISM, ANIMAL RIGHTS, AND JAINISM

The website www.veganjains.com is run by J. Jina Shah, M.D., MPH, who prepared this advocacy kit with contributions from many others.

The website www.jainvegans.org is run by the Jain Vegans Working Group in the UK, which also has an interactive yahoo-group for aspiring and current vegans from the worldwide Jain community.

The blog <http://jainaedu.blogspot.com/> is run by Pravin K. Shah, the head of the education committee of JAINA the federation of Jain associations in North America, who also co-wrote the Book of Compassion.

The website <http://www.atmadharma.com> has some recorded talks about veganism given in the UK and other Jain resources.

The website <http://luvinarms.org> is of a sanctuary run by Jain vegans.

Pranav Mehta moderates a WhatsApp group to help aspiring Jain vegans. To join a Jain Vegan transition Whatsapp group to get support, tips and help for transition to a vegan diet and life style you can do the following:

1. on your smartphone ensure you have WhatsApp app
2. open a web browser such as safari or chrome on your smartphone
3. paste this URL in the address bar of the browser: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/oAStyTic9dlQGmc6BQ6B4>
4. your browser will ask whether you want to open it in WhatsApp
5. click yes and Whatsapp will launch
6. you will see some basic information about the group and you can click the 'Join Group' button

Many individual Jain vegans have produced their own content and published in various sites online. For example, these links are for lectures recorded by Dr. Tushar Mehta:

[The Philosophy and Practice of Non-Violence in Jainism - Glasgow Scotland: The Only Way is Ethics Festival.](#)

[The global and environmental impact of Plant VS Animal foods](#) – VegFest UK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH12RoY58fM>

[2014 Talk on Vegan Diet and Health](#)

Dairy Production and Cow Slaughter In India: WhatsApp Versions

- addresses the common myths that Jains and other indian vegetarians use in rationalizing the use of dairy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynPVcTuL-UQ> = English 5 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlQlbHZnv14> = HINDI 5 min

Dairy Production and Cow Slaughter In India, all videos on one [webpage](#).

These links have been sent by Pranav Mehta:

-A [brochure](#) designed to cover all benefits of veganism over vegetarianism.

-An [FAQ](#) for most important vegan food related questions.

-A [video](#) on how relying on animals for any food is affecting humans and earth in so many ways.

ARTICLES

[Third Jain](#) organization pledges to Go Vegan.

Connection to climate change

Climate Change is one of the greatest threats to animal and human and even plant life. It will disrupt our cities, homes, food supply and livelihood. The consequences will be dire as animal species will become extinct and millions of people become refugees. The key principles of Jainism related to vegetarianism and non-possessiveness offer effective solutions in the mitigation of climate change. Animal agriculture and livestock have more impact on global warming than all transportation. A vegan Jain lifestyle serve as a model for everyone who is concerned about climate change. The Jain Declaration on Nature by L. M. Singhvi is an early work articulating the concern that Jains have for the environment, and can be [downloaded](#).

Currently Sudhanshu Jain is working on a Jain statement regarding climate change that includes veganism. Two of his presentations can be downloaded from the following links:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/eamzhtr3hnd12cs/Aparigraha_What_Jains_Can_Teach_Environmentalists_7_1_2017.pdf?dl=0

https://www.dropbox.com/s/4p2joue3bxdwa8x/Why_Jains_are_the_key_to_solving_Climate_Change_7_2_2017.pdf?dl=0

The [Jain Center of Southern California](#) the the Center will serve only Jain Vegan food at all future programs.

Selected scholars that have written about Jainism and ahimsa, animals and nature:

Padmanabh Jaini, scholar of Buddhism and Jainism
[The Jaina Path of Purification](#)

Tara Sethia, ed [Ahimsā, Anekānta, and Jainism](#)

Christopher Key Chapple, [Reverence for All Life in the Jain tradition](#) http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1141&context=theo_fac

Kristi Wiley, [The A to Z of Jainism](#)

JAIN ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

- See [profiles](#) of Vegan Jains for short interviews and authors of posts at all key websites
- [Gary Francione](#) is a vegan and animal rights activist that identifies as Jain www.HowDoIGoVegan.com.
- Ahimsak Eco-Vegan Committee of JAINA (Jain associations in North America) led by this kit writer-contact veganjains@gmail.com
- Saurabh Dalal, the former president of the Vegetarian Society of D.C. is a Jain vegan.
- Sagar Shah, a key member of the Jain Vegans Working Group in the UK is also a member of the board of trustees of the Vegan Society of the UK.
- Jainism has much in common philosophically and culturally with Buddhism and Hinduism as sister dharma traditions. Please see their kits for additional inspiration and in particular the following: Satesh Rao (Phoenix, Arizona), please see Hindu: Advaitin IVC Advocacy Kit. Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Buddhist teacher. The prayer proposed for Jains in the US on Thanksgiving is adopted from his [Five Contemplations](#) before meals.
- [Will Tuttle](#)



Follow Up Support for You

SHOULD YOU NEED IDEAS, SUPPORT, ADVICE, ETC., PLEASE EMAIL:

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