

## **A Thought for Paryushan:**

### **Dairy (milk, ghee) involves Himsa**

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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

In the western world, the best way Jains today can stand for Ahimsa, and give even greater blessings to the world we share, is by relinquishing our consumption and use of milk, dairy products, and all other products from animals. We must refrain from food that comes from suffering and violence, and then that suffering will not come back to us like a boomerang - the universal law of cause and effect from which there is no escape. In this way, Jains can continue to be at the forefront of Ahimsa, each of us showing great compassion and unconditional love. For Paryushan, let us start walking this noble path.

- Chitrabhanu

### **Dairy Cows**

A cow raised for her milk is forcefully impregnated yearly, and her babies are taken away within a few days. She is either pregnant or lactating 9 or 10 months out of every year only to have the cycle repeat once she gives birth.

Certain amounts of pus and blood are legally permissible in milk. We drink this milk and use it in puja other rituals.

Dairy cows are no longer vegetarian. Along with grains, they are fed unnatural, high-protein diets, which include approximately 20% meat from dead chickens, pigs, and other cows.

Using powerful hormones, the cows are forced to produce 3 to 4 times as much milk as they naturally would. Also, despite the heavy use of antibiotics, these animals develop mastitis, open wounds and other infections.

A cow's natural lifespan is about 20 years, but cows used by the dairy industry are slaughtered after only 4 or 5 years, and their meat turned into pet food or hamburgers.

### **Transport and Slaughter**

Nearly every adult cow around 5 years of age and almost every male baby cow will be shipped to a slaughterhouse and killed. When transported in hot weather, many cows collapse in the heat; in the cold, cows can freeze to the sides of the truck until workers pry them off with crowbars. Cows are shot in the head with a steel bolt gun meant to stun them, but often this fails to render them insensible to pain. Dairy cows may be conscious when they are shackled, hoisted, and cut.



*Confined dairy cows*



*Calf being raised for veal*



*A dairy cow slaughter*

### Veal Calves

All calves are taken from their mothers within a few days. Female calves become dairy cows and male calves are sold for veal. They are kept confined, many in dark, tiny crates, where they cannot move so that their flesh stays tender. They are slaughtered in about six months.

### Organic Milk and “Happy” Cows

Many organic or local dairies advertise with pictures of happy cows. In reality, “organic” only means that the cows are fed organic food and are not given antibiotics and growth hormones but they are still abused, slaughtered around 5 years of age, many times kept in small restricted areas, and their newborn calves are taken away for veal. And while some farms may treat cows in slightly better ways, there is no such thing as dairy products made without himsa, particularly under modern conditions that prevail *everywhere* today.



Calf being raised for veal



Cows stand and sleep upon a ground covered with manure



Cows treated like machines

### “My Visit to A Dairy Farm”

“[In May 1995] I visited a dairy farm located north of Burlington, VT... [it] supplies all its milk to Ben and Jerry's ... It was extremely difficult for me to watch the cows' sufferings during the milking... sometimes traces of blood got mixed with the milk... The evening I was there, the farm was shipping three baby calves to a veal factory. The mother cows were crying when their babies were separated from them. I can still hear the cries of the mother cows...” (*Pravin K Shah, Raleigh, NC*)

### Violence to the Environment

Just one 1,200-pound dairy cow alone produces 120 pounds of wet manure per day, the same amount of waste as 23 humans. Manure lagoons from livestock make up nearly 1/3 of all human related methane emissions in the world. Dairies are a significant source of water pollution and air pollution.

### Violence to Ourselves

Recently, the dairy industry had to stop its misleading ads that claimed dairy products help you lose weight; studies show that dairy products may increase body weight, as well as cause prostate cancer, breast cancer, heart disease, asthma, allergies and diabetes. The use of antibiotics in cows is a major contributing factor to human antibiotic resistance.

In countries where dairy products are not generally used, there is actually less osteoporosis than in the US. Milk and other animal products actually cause the bones to release calcium to neutralize the acid produced in our bodies by animal protein.

All the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals in cow's milk—without the excess fat, cholesterol, hormones, antibiotics, and acidity—can easily be obtained in other fortified, non-dairy milks and beverages such as soy milk or various nut milks.

### Non-Violent Alternatives for Milk and Other Dairy Products

The easiest, most effective thing we can do, to stop this cruelty, is to buy or make alternatives to dairy products. With the abundance of choices nowadays, it is now very easy to remove the violence from our diet.

**Milk:**

There are many alternatives available in nearly every major grocery store, including soy milk, rice milk, coconut milk, almond milk, and hemp milk sold under the brands of Silk, Westsoy, Rice Dream, or Pacific Foods. To make almond milk or other nut milks, all you need is soaked almonds, a blender and a sweetener if you choose.

**Ice Cream:**

There are soy, rice, and coconut alternatives to ice cream with brands including Tofutti, So Delicious, Soy Dream, Rice Dream, Coconut Bliss, and Turtle Mountain.

**Butter, Ghee, Cheese, Yogurt:**

Soy Garden and Earth Balance make healthful non-dairy butters, which can be clarified to use as vegan ghee. There are numerous non-dairy cheeses, including Daiya vegan cheeses, which melt as well as any dairy cheese. Soy and coconut based yogurts are also available. The “Un-cheese Cookbook” shows you how to make your own non-dairy cheese. Tofutti makes non-dairy sour cream and cream cheese. Among the many vegan cookbooks covering a variety of cuisines, there are at least two that focus on vegan Indian cooking. Remember, there are many choices to fit your tastes and desire for a cruelty-free diet.

***So, as you do Paryushan this year, if you have consumed milk, think about saying “Micchami Dukkadam” to the cows, their calves, to the environment, and to yourself! Please consider adopting a vegan diet.***

For additional information, please e-mail to [education@jaina.org](mailto:education@jaina.org) and we will provide proper guidance based on your specific need.