

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

JOURNAL OF BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

INDIA

Unfulfilled dream of returning to the Rajasthan desert



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Beauty Without Cruelty



INDIA BRANCH : 4 PRINCE OF WALES' DRIVE, WANOWRIE. PUNE 411 040. TEL: (+ 91.212) 66 4321 FAX : 66 4312

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President **Mr Akbarali H Jetha**
Hon Treasurer **Mr D R Ratnagar**

Hon Secretary **Ms Pilu Dady**
Chairperson & Editor **Ms Diana Ratnagar**

Contents

BWC Update	1
Bali - The Sacrifice	2
How can we sacrifice another's life?	4
Birds get opening day off	5
Camel joyrides may actually end!	6
Not Fair!	8
Rights of an Ant	10
Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma	12

BWC Centre Directors

Bangalore

Mr Sudershan Kumar

M 4/1 SFHS BDA Flats, BTM Layout
Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore 560 076
Tel (080) 663 44 38 / 663 49 42

Mumbai

Mr Hiren Kara

Pallonji Mansion, 43 Cuffe Parade
Mumbai 400 005
Tel (022) 204 10 46 / 215 05 58

Calcutta

Ms Poornima Toolsidas

15/B, Clive Row
Calcutta 700 001
Tel (033) 220 93 11-2

Madras

Ms Sonal Murali

Olcott Bunglow
Theosophical Society
Adyar, Madras 600 020
Tel (044) 491 18 74

New Delhi

Ms Kamala Shastri

201, Asia House, Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110 001
Tel (011) 38 77 33

Varanasi

Dr C V Agarwal

C/o The Theosophical Society
Kamachha, Varanasi 221 010
Tel (0542) 32 12 34

Beauty Without Cruelty

is a way of life
which causes no creature
of land, sea or air,
terror, torture or death.

AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS



Important request to all Members

With each issue of **COMPASSIONATE FRIEND**, dozens of copies are returned to us by the post office with the remarks 'left'. We therefore appeal to members to please inform us about their change in address. Please remember, especially if you are a life member, that you will completely stop receiving BWC literature unless we have your new address. It is up to you to let us know. And when you do, please do not forget to quote your membership number which appears above your name on the address label of your magazine. In fact please quote this number in all your correspondence with us. It is of vital importance when renewing your annual subscription.

BWC INVESTMENT GUIDE

Our upto-date edition of the BWC Investment Guide (May 1996) is now available. BWC life members can avail of a copy against a donation of Rs 25/-. It will be sent by Book-Post, however if you desire that it be despatched to you by registered post, please add Rs 10/-.

This 4th edition of the BWC Investment Guide is much more comprehensive, apart from of course being updated. Many companies which were in the green category have unfortunately had to be shifted to the orange or red categories. The ratings have changed mainly due to diversification of the companies' activities. In addition we have this time given red ratings to manufacturers of items such as lubricants for which mutton tallow is used. We have also added many more names of companies including mutual funds.

Ahinsa Trophy



The Ahinsa Trophy for enrolling the highest number of Life Members during 1995-96 goes to Mr Rikabchand B Jain of Hubli. Mr Jain is an active life member of BWC since 1992 and has promoted our cause with dedication by constantly enrolling members, for which we are most grateful.

Membership Development

Among the animal welfare organisations in India, BWC is proud to have the highest number of subscribing members, more than half of which are life members. As strength lies in numbers, we appeal to each of our members to enrol at least two new life members. Forms and leaflets are available on request.

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

from Beauty Without Cruelty (India), Summer 1996

Bali – The Sacrifice

A real life experiment

Camellia Satija

There is a widespread misconception that Hinduism licences animal sacrifices. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Being born and brought up in West Bengal, - I was exposed to the worship of Shakti - and when conducted in its proper perspective - can be extremely exhilarating. But - unfortunately, as with all religions - many corrupted versions of ritualistic worship entered the folds of Hinduism - specially in the worship of Shakti!

Ever since I was a child I always accompanied Boro Jethu (elder uncle) to Calcutta's famous Kali Bari Temple and payed my humble respects to the Goddess Kali, and heard stories about her many forms - Durga, Shyama, Kali, Chamundi, Shamsan Kali, etc.

Awestruck at Jagat Mata's (Durga - mother of the world) overwhelming compassion and protection of human and animal life forms - I made frequent visits to my favourite Kali Bari.

Boro Jethu, ever patient and knowledgeable, kept me informed about the mythology, folklore and reality attached to the Mother Goddess. "Goddess Kali came down to earth to destroy the evil in the world along with the evil beings and she succeeded - peace and truth were restored on earth", Boro Jethu explained.

Then, one day, there was a serious gathering of elders and much hushed consultations went on with the family pujari (priest).

We were rudely expelled from the room. I hung around like a leech and discovered to my unbelievable horror, that on this particular Kali Puja day (which coincides with Diwali), an animal sacrifice was to be performed in our family house.

"But that's impossible", I screamed, emerging from my hiding place! "Ma Kali does not take the lives of the innocent; she is Jagat Mata; she gives life; she does not accept blood"; I raved and ranted like a lunatic.

Words of wisdom, they say, emerge from the mouths of babes! But that was not to be in my case (though I was more than a babe) I was heavily castigated for my impertinence.

Boro Jethu insisted I visit the Kali Bari on Saturday. I went along with a sinking feeling in my heart. I could not believe what I saw! Goats - mostly young ones and babies, lined up, bathed, garlanded and with vermilion on their foreheads, ready to be sacrificed! I had fooled myself all along that this sort of thing took place in the middle ages.

"Jethu", I croaked, "what is all this? Are these goats going to be slaughtered?"

"Stupid child, they are not going to be slaughtered; they are going to be sacrificed at the altar of Ma Kali (Mother Kali). They will get a better and higher birth after we liberate their souls from the wretched bodies of goats!"

"Who are we to make such a serious decision and who has given us the right to make a judgement on their behalf?" I yelled. By now I could not contain myself any longer and my voice started getting shriller and shriller. Fear was writ large

over the faces of the goats and their sixth sense told them their future.

"Worship is sacred and should exude nonviolence and compassion and love - this is violence", I shrieked! My constant gesticulations and high pitched voice had attracted a fair amount of people - including the family priest!

"A mother gives life", I continued ranting, "she creates life; no mother appreciates life taken on her behalf and to please her". I was almost choking with tears.

This is not what I believed in - no, this was extremely grotesque and wrong. This is not what the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and other religious texts taught us! "Ignorant child", (if a then 18 year old is to be considered ignorant and a child), shouted the family priest, glaring down at me. "Are you trying to question tradition and me?"

"The penances of a man that abstains from cruelty are inexhaustible. Just by his existence he is always performing sacrifices. He is father and mother to all creatures", I quoted knowledgeably from the Mahabharata, but without success!

I tried again desperately. (I had been reading our scriptures to polish up my limited knowledge). "Making the senses the sacrifice victims, having constructed the sacrificial altar of penance, and having made obligations in the fire in the form of non-injury, I perform the sacrifices of my own self". No one was impressed! The crowds grew.

By now I was a bundle of nerves as I charged towards the line of sacrificial goats and picked up the smallest one - holding it close to my heart. Everyone was aghast - this was the limit!

The pitiable bleating of the kid made me hysterical and in desperation I quoted the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, my voice rising to a crescendo, "Whosoever offers to me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that offering of love, of the pure of heart,

I accept".

I failed - I failed miserably to explain to all present that it was wrong to take life when you can't give life. The goat was rudely snatched out of my arms - proclaimed impure - bathed and 'dressed up' again and sacrificed (I prefer the words slaughter or better still murder) in front of my half closed eyes in one *jhatka* or blow. The head fell to the ground, the blood spurted from the cut jugular vein of the body, all the time the body and head jerking in an involuntary motion - as hands shot forward to take the fresh warm blood to smear on to their foreheads, all the while hysterically screaming - "Jai Ma Kali".

I don't know for how long I must have cried in my helplessness - but I promised to stop the sacrifice that was to take place at the family home on Kali Puja day. I was angry at Jethu for never having confirmed my doubts about the animal sacrifices before.

The family were prevented from sacrificing the goat at home! I won't go into details about the emotional blackmail I had indulged in.

I never visited Kali Bari again - but I still believe that Ma Kali will punish all those who violate the laws of nature, here, in this very life of theirs!

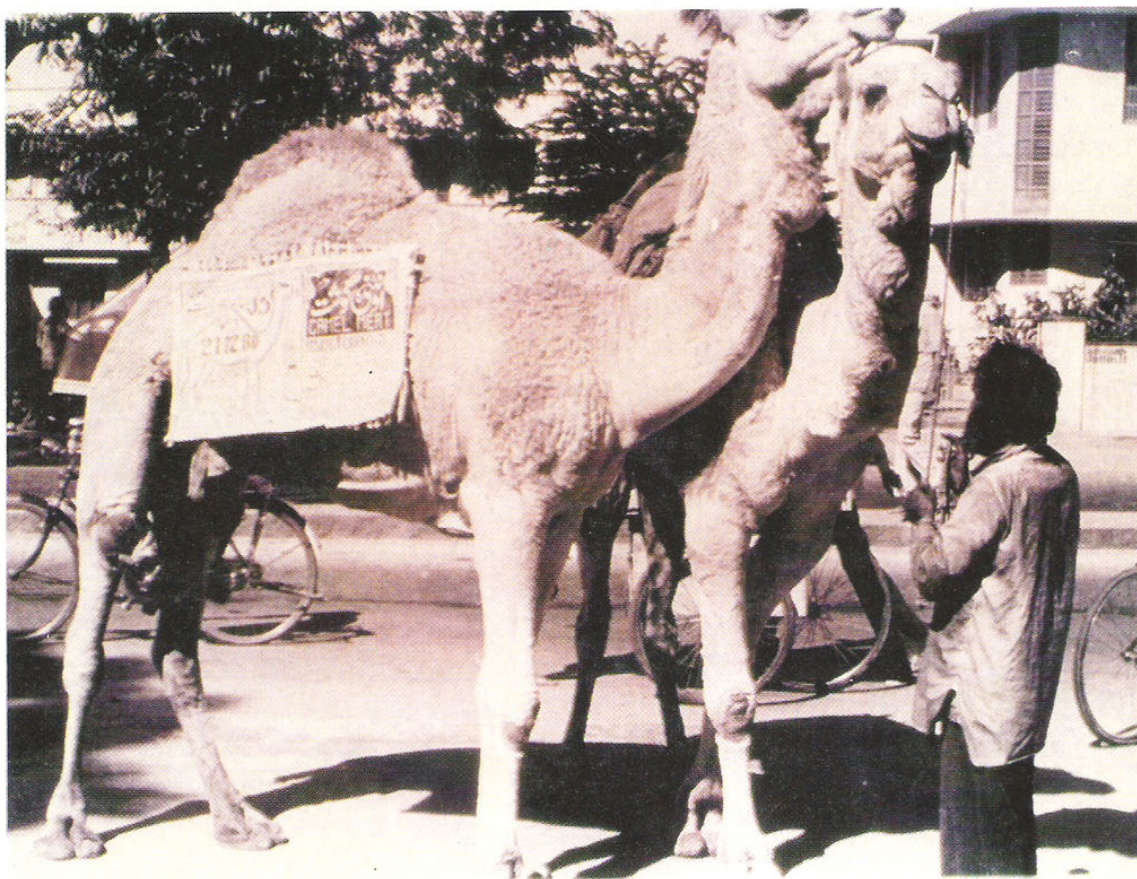
This was the beginning of my long journey towards vegetarianism! I am hopeful that a day will come, when the killing of animals will be held at par with that of the killing of man - and the offender will be treated as a murderer because, not so long ago, humans were also sacrificed, till appropriate laws were passed for their protection.


COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

from Beauty Without Cruelty (India), Summer 1996

How can we sacrifice another's life?

We have all seen or at least heard of goats sacrificed on Bakri Id. This year the *Indian Express*, under its masthead, carried a telling photograph of a goat kissing its partner good-bye. But, few people are aware that for years in addition to goats, camels are also sacrificed on this day. It has been occurring in Bangalore for years. (And this year three were brought specially for ritual sacrifice to the Deonar abattoir.) Camels are made to walk at least 2500 kms from Rajasthan to cities in the South where they are ritually slaughtered. In April 1996, the Akhila Karnataka Pranidaya Sangha of Bangalore somehow managed to get the police to seize a large consignment bound for slaughter houses on the outskirts of the city. 119 animals were handed over to the AKPDS shelter.



Camel meat on sale for Bakri Id in Bangalore some years ago

Hundreds of animals that followed, in smaller batches of 10 to 12 were not so fortunate as they were sold in bylanes and remote areas for prices ranging from Rs 6,000/- to Rs 15,000/-. The police it seems did nothing to stop the brisk trade or slaughter.

The Times of India summed it up in a sentence: In another poll-eve bid to appease the electorate, the Karnataka Government is learned to have quietly decided to look the other way while camels are unlawfully slaughtered for religious purposes.

BWC feels that we exhibit hypocrisy by demanding human rights for ourselves but denying the elementary right of life to our fellow creatures. Taking the life of a defenceless innocent animal and calling it a sacrifice is surely a demonstration of very undeveloped moral values. Do people really think that the kind and compassionate God is pleased when we take life in His name and feast upon the flesh of the killed animal? It matters little if camels, goats or cows are killed for Bakri Id; or if goats, chicken and buffalo calves are sacrificed in Hindu temples to appease deities such as Samantdada, Manju Bhog, goddesses Mahalaxmi and Kali, or at festivals like the Bhiroba Jatra. It is animal and bird sacrifice which can only be stopped by enlightened religious leaders.

Birds get opening day off at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics

*BeautyWithoutCruelty (India) is proud to have been one of the animal right organisations which collectively appealed for cancellation of the planned live bird release. (See **COMPASSIONATE FRIEND**, November 1995.)*

Atlanta - Peace has been declared in the battle over the Olympic doves.

There will be no release of birds in Atlanta next year, International Olympic officials said breaking a tradition that dates to 1920.

A dove release, symbolising the peaceful gathering is a requirement of every opening ceremony. But the Atlanta organisers didn't want to offend animal rights advocates.

It is the symbol which is important, said IOC director general Francois Carrard.

The doves - actually white pigeons - suffer disorienting night blindness. In South Korea in 1988, some landed on the cauldron and were barbecued when the flame was lit.

Dove shaped balloons were released in Norway last year and Atlanta planners have something similar in mind, a little more theatrically and a little more symbolically, said Billy Payne, chief organiser.

The decision extends the Olympic spirit of peace to all living beings, including the birds, said Jennifer Allen, spokeswoman - People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Courtesy : Ben Brown in USA TODAY, December 7, 1995


COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

from **BeautyWithoutCruelty (India)**, Summer 1996

Camel Joyrides may actually end!

Sudnya Patkar



Photo : P H Bhutani

We hear you say, "But I thought they were banned". You are right and wrong...

Right, because on 15th October 1995 *People for Animals (PFA)* obtained a stay order from the Mumbai High Court by which the entry of camels into Mumbai and their use for giving joyrides has been prohibited.

Wrong because it has not been possible to get this court order implemented and the camels continue to be used for joyrides in Mumbai.

The situation called for action : once the camels continue to remain on the beaches of Mumbai, new camels would most certainly be smuggled into the city, the trade

would continue to thrive, and the court order would forever remain on file. Therefore to stop this activity once and for all, **Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC)** has got together with local animal-welfare organisations like the *All India Animal Welfare Association (AIAWA)*, *Bombay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (B SPCA)* and *Ahimsa* to rescue them. **BWC** which is funding the operation in whole, has found a place in the desert area of Rajasthan where the camels presently in Mumbai will be rehabilitated. And *AIAWA* are handling the operation. The task sounds easy, but is enormous.

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from **Beauty Without Cruelty** (India), Summer 1996

Nevertheless, the organisations are confident of success, especially since the Supreme Court has, luckily at the same time imposed a complete ban on animal joyrides on the beaches of Mumbai. The Supreme Court order has been passed independently, based on a letter written way back in 1991 by **BWC** member from Mumbai, Mr Tushar Dedhia. Mr Dedhia had appealed to the Supreme Court about the deplorable conditions of the beaches in Mumbai. The Supreme Court converted this letter into a writ petition and appointed two eminent lawyers in Mumbai, Dr Dhananjay Chandrachud and Mr Navroz H Seervai to inspect the beaches and report to the Supreme Court. In the comprehensive report submitted by the two lawyers, they highlighted the pathetic condition of the

camels on the beaches of Mumbai. The Supreme Court took cognisance of their report and immediately banned camel and pony joyrides on the beaches.

As a result of this Supreme Court order and the earlier High Court order, no camel in Mumbai can be an asset to its owner. **BWC** feels that in the present scenario and in view of the approaching monsoons, owners should have little or no hesitation in parting with their animals. But it can only work out if the Municipality and Police vigilantly carry out their duties as per the court orders by impounding the animals on the beaches. Hopefully, animal lovers in Mumbai can expect to see the day when these camels will be living in their homeland of Rajasthan, far away from the torturous life in humid and saline Mumbai.



An ill and emaciated camel being lifted by Bombay SPCA for treatment. Photo : B SPCA

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

from **Beauty Without Cruelty** (India), Summer 1996



A popular competition at the Pushkar fair

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* states that : 'If any person beats, kicks, overrides, overdrives, overloads, tortures or otherwise treats any animal so as to subject it to unnecessary pain or suffering or causes or, being the owner permits, any animal to be so treated ... he shall be punishable'.

Therefore, animal races such as those involving camels, oxen etc. are illegal. It is sad that people are unaware of this, and that they fail to even comprehend the cruelties involved. For example, the State

Governments of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have been themselves over the years promoting bullock-cart and ox-racing events. Usually they turn out to be politically motivated and the sufferers are the persons who get injured and even die and of course the poor animals.

As for camel racing, it takes place in Rajasthan. The site, Pushkar 11 km from Ajmer - is first a place of pilgrimage and second a camel fair. The annual gathering draws about 3 lakh persons and 2 lakh animals. It is held for 5 days starting on the 11th day after the new moon of the month of Kartik (falls around October-November as per the English calendar).

Pushkar, like Varanasi, is one of the sacred Hindu places. It has 400 temples, including one dedicated to Lord Brahma, the Creator. With the pilgrims come the animals - mainly camels, but some cows and horses too. They cover great distances to attend the fair.

On arrival the camels are all cleaned, washed and adorned with finery; a few shorn to form particular patterns. Trading is brisk as thousands change hands. Babies are separated from their mothers.

Some are sold because they are too old. Yet others to get a good price - the larger the hump the better the camel, the lower portion of the leg should be short, hooves round and small, nose thick and ears small and sharp - all checked along with teeth which tell age.

In order to enter the camel beauty contest, a visit to a stall selling special jewellery for camels is a must. And for the sake of human vanity (certainly not the camel's vanity) some of the animals' noses are pierced and a ring is inserted. A prize is given to the most beautiful camel from the ones made to parade

up and down!

In addition to jewellery and finery for camels, the bazaar stalls sell wooden combs, hand tied and dyed fabrics, woollen shawls and leather footwear and saddles. The irony is that the leather may be actually camel leather and some of the jewellery made from camel bone.

An important part of the fair is the racing of camels. It is a long drawn out affair with stiff competition. Amidst cheers and jeers from spectators, camels are made to lope across the sands, sometimes justifiably throwing off some of their racers. The 'entertainment' is down-right cruel. Camels are loaded with the maximum number of adults they can hold - a dozen or so - and as if this were not terrible enough, the animals are then made to race each other. Surely it is no enjoyment for the camels. Not even the winners.

An air of merrymaking and relaxation after worship is evident among most people. But, surely this should not encompass unthinking cruelty towards their animals. A clear awareness of the issue is very essential.

Vegetarian Summerfest 1996 : A World Vegetarian Congress !

Are you coming to the 32nd World Vegetarian Congress in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, USA? Remember the dates are from 29th July to 4th August this year. It is not too late to book. World congresses are an experience not to be missed, not only helping you make new friends from all parts of the world, but also giving you an opportunity to update your knowledge on vegetarianism in all aspects and to enjoy meals that are guaranteed totally vegetarian.

Booking forms available from

North American Vegetarian Society (NAVS)
P O Box 72, Dolgeville, New York 13329, U S A
Telephone (001 518) 568 7970.


COMPASSIONATE FRIEND
from **Beauty Without Cruelty** (India), Summer 1996



The Rights of an Ant

Raju Z Moray

I saw a little red ant crawling up my sleeve. Without batting an eyelid I slapped it out of existence. Nothing unusual? Right! You would have done the same thing yourself? Absolutely! Now just wait a minute. Think of it this way. I just sentenced a living creature to death. It had done me no harm. It was probably just lost and trying to find its way home. To its loved ones, waiting. But I had a fear. Fear that it may bite me. So it was my problem. My psychological problem. And I killed another living creature because of it.

Now let me assume it had bitten me. So I was attacked. I was pricked and had a right to defend myself. Maybe even to retaliate. After all, I'm a macho man. How dare that little creature crawl all over me and sting me? But hold it. Do I kill everyone who stings me? Can I kill every living creature that hurts me? Even if I consider myself superior? Just because I think that I am superior, am I superior? Can I condemn another creature without giving it a hearing? Do other living creatures have no right even to be heard in a matter which can end in the deprivation of their right to life? Would I have killed my child if it bit me violently? Would I have killed my pet dog?

Key, what's that? Another red ant crawling up my sleeve. Probably the wife of the deceased! Or maybe the husband. Or is it a child? Anyway, after all this soul searching, I think I'll just blow it away. Phoo! There! It has landed safely on the floor and is crawling away. Just imagine! For an ant to fall from my sleeve onto the floor is like my falling from the 100th floor of some skyscraper. Would I have been able to walk away after such a fall? Or even to crawl away? Is it not a miracle of sorts? Maybe it does have a right to live its own life in its own way...

Why do we batter a crocodile when we find it in our gutter? Or stone a leopard cub if it strays into our compound? You'll say they are invading our territory. Are they? A logical, scientific person like you will love logic and statistics. So answer these: Whose population has gone up? Ours or theirs? Whose area of residence has increased? Ours or theirs? Who are the encroachers upon the others' territories? Us or them? We, who won't part with a square foot without extracting


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its market value from the purchaser, didn't pay a dime to the original inhabitants of the forests whose square miles we have despoiled. But since we write the textbooks, they have become the 'predators'. Since we want to feast, they become our fodder.

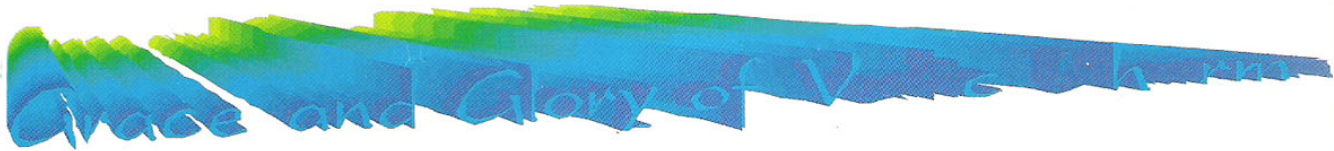
Since we have so much faith in established 'facts' and 'statistics', we should also consider what the Americans whom we love to 'ape' have now discovered. That there is nutritional inefficiency inherent in using animals for food. Ninety percent of the protein content of grain is lost when fed to livestock; ninety-six percent of its calories and all of its fibre and carbohydrates vanish out of the tail ends of cows, hogs and sheep. Americans have discovered that if they reduced their beef consumption by only ten percent, the leftover grain would feed all of the sixty million people who starve to death throughout the world each year. Want to hear more? To produce a day's food for one meat-eater it takes over 4,000 gallons of water, for a lacto-ovo vegetarian only 1,200 gallons and for a pure vegetarian, only 300 gallons. What does all this mean? It means this: It takes less water to produce a year's food for a pure vegetarian than to produce a month's food for a meat eater!

What has all this environment and animal friendly talk got to do with me, you may ask. I am an Indian Citizen. I have my fundamental rights! Yes Ma'am. But what about your fundamental duties? Do you know them? Well, you are supposed to. Our Constitution has an entire chapter (Part IV-A) devoted to them. Look them up if you like. It is your fundamental duty, among other things, to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, to have compassion for living creatures, to abjure violence and also to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform. Surprised? You did not know this did you? Well, I wouldn't have told you either - if it hadn't been for that little red ant crawling up my sleeve.



Cruelty-free Paper

It will interest readers to know that the coated paper used for this magazine does not contain any animal ingredients.



Pandit Sudhakar Chaturvedi

Yagna means the act of worship, respect for sentient beings, fostering of friendship and unity among all sections of mankind.

The Vedas exhort each individual to sacrifice his own comfort; but in those cruel and disgusting sacrifices of the *tantric* and *puranic* concept it was the poor animals that sacrificed their most valued and precious of all possessions - their very lives. Is the injuring or killing, of an innocent animal or spilling of its blood a noble deed?

These violent and bloody sacrifices which are diametrically opposed to the vedic concept and to the spirit of *yagna* are of a later origin. They have been a curse to humanity. They have cost too much, so far as Vedic *dharma* is concerned. It was because of inhumane and cursed acts of animal slaughter in the name of *yagnas* that pious, well meaning and noble hearted reformers like Buddha and Mahavir rebelled against the then prevailing form of Hinduism and started their own sects. But the Vedas or Vedic *dharma* is not to blame for it. The cause of mischief lay in the insufficient knowledge of Vedic terminology on the parts of the commentators, who misinterpreted the Vedic *mantras*. The erring commentators were themselves misled, and, in turn, they never spared any effort in misleading others!

According to the Vedas, the purification of the soul and strengthening of the nation is *Ashvamedha*; the purification of the speech, various faculties of perception, the fertilisation of earth and the proper use of the sun's rays are *Gometha*; the ennobling of the soul is *Ajamedha*. As all these are noble deeds they are *yagnas* too! Where is any room for the violent act of slaughter here?

The Atharva Veda declares in unmistakable terms

O Violence! the slaughter of innocent animals is dreadful. Do not kill our cows, horses, men and other sentient beings (Atharva Veda 10-1-29)

May I be dear to all animals (Atharva Veda 17-1-4)

May I look at all the creatures with the eyes of a friend (Yajur Veda 36-18)

Nowhere in the Vedas do we find even faintest trace of any sanction for sacrifices of the violent kind. Nor is it surprising, for how can the Vedas, which preach universal love and awakening the spirit of unity, eulogise blood-spilling?

CIVIL PLAY

God made such a beautiful butterfly!
Certainly more beautiful than a fly.
Its graceful wings are not JUST for museums;
Its true beauty is that it should fly.

Yet, we scrutinise it, admire it,
Pinned on velvet, beneath glass shewes.
It is CIVILISED that we do so,
Even without concern for the butterfly's true self.

It is a fact that does us proud,
For silken garments are on display.
They are the cause of many a cocoon's shroud,
For man unchallenged moulds ... the rules of play.



Soonnu Nalladaroo
Courtesy : The Indian P E N

One of the qualities that separates us
2-legged animals from the 4-legged ones is



It is what makes us stand up tall
instead of crawling about on all fours.

And standing up tall is what frees
our arms to reach out to a fellow being and
say

Let me help you!