

Swami Shrutpragyaji's Discourses for YOUTH on Jainism in America

Discourse # 1. **AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)**

May 2, 2006 – Day 1 (8 pm to 9:30 pm), Chicago, IL

- *Vandami Namam Sami* – greeting *Swami Ji*
- *Navkar Mantra*
- Breathing Meditation for 5 minutes with “AUM” sound

- Jainism has many different aspects including history, astronomy, physics, geography, philosophy, rituals, principles, and science

- We will focus on the TRIPLE ‘A’ principles
 - *Ahimsa* (nonviolence)
 - *Aparigraha* (nonpossessiveness)
 - *Anekantvaad* (nonabsolutism)

- Today: **AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)**
 - Food that should be consumed according to *Ahimsa*
 - Even though we are animals, our human anatomy is specific for a vegetarian diet only!
 - **Intestines:** Herbivores (animals that eat vegetarian food only – that includes humans, deer, elephants, cows, monkeys) have long, twisted intestines so that we can chew food properly and have it digest thoroughly and adequately. Carnivores (animals that eat non-vegetarian food only – that include tigers, wolves) have short intestines so that the food can easily leave the body without being digested thoroughly.
 - **Method of drinking water:** we (herbivores) use our LIPS to pull the water from the glass into our mouths. Carnivores use their TONGUE to draw the water into their mouth.
 - **Nails:** Herbivores have nails whereas carnivores have pointed claws.
 - **Teeth:** Herbivores have blunt teeth whereas carnivores have sharp, pointed teeth

- 5 possible diets here, that are categorized from most violent diet to most compassionate diet
 1. Non-vegetarian
 - Diet includes meat, fish, seafood, chicken, steak, red meats, etc.
 2. Ovo-lacto-vegetarian
 - diet includes eggs and dairy products but no meat of any type
 3. Lacto-vegetarian
 - diet includes dairy products but no meat or eggs of any type
 4. Vegan
 - diet EXcludes meat, eggs, dairy. Diet includes *kandmul*. Lifestyle is also vegan!
 5. Underground root vegetables NOT in diet (*kandmul*)
 - onions, potatoes, garlic, radish, beets, carrots are EXcluded but dairy is consumed
 - We do not eat underground vegetables, as the sun does not reach below the ground. Since there is no sunlight underground, there are more bacteria (sunlight eliminates bacteria) and therefore, by consuming those underground vegetables, we are hurting and killing more souls. Also, we are disturbing the shelter and food of animals when we uproot those vegetables. Also, underground vegetables have “infinite souls in one

body”. Vegetables that are grown above the ground have “one soul, one body”. By eating the underground veggies, we are hurting INFINITE souls, instead of hurting ONE soul.

- **Our ultimate goal is to consume a diet free of underground roots, dairy, meats, and eggs**
- Therefore, we must focus on a combination of diets numbered 4 and 5 above ☺. In addition, we should follow a VEGAN lifestyle. We should check egg ingredients in cakes, cookies, ice creams, and donuts. We should NOT wear leather, silk, fur, angora, rabbit hair, cashmere, down and goose feathers, and wool. We should consume soy milk, tofu, soy cheese, soy ice cream, and calcium-fortified fruit juices and drink lots of water! In America, this is especially easy to do as there are SO MANY alternatives and flavors for everything!
- To elaborate:
 - There are two types of food: *Bhakshya* (edible) and *Abhakshya* (non-edible)
 - Eggs, whether they are fertilized or not, are *Abhakshya*. They are considered non-vegetarian, as the egg has a potential to live. So we must not consume eggs.
 - Seeds in plants also have a potential to live. That is why we should not consume food (fruits and vegetables) that contains many, many seeds.
 - To start a more compassionate diet, if you are choosing between a vegan diet and a *kandmul*-free diet, start with the *kandmul*-free diet. When you eat dairy, you are hurting the animals (cows mainly) but not killing them. Milk is cruel because the PROCESS of obtaining milk is cruel. When you eat *kandmul*, you are KILLING infinite souls attached to ONE body. After you have adapted the *kandmul*-free diet, then start reducing dairy products in your diet.
- Leather is to be AVOIDED
 - Found in purses, shoes, belts, jackets, gloves, and on car seats. We should all purchase cars WITHOUT leather seats in them! Even our cars should be vegetarian. There are many synthetic alternatives available.
- Why do we do *Upvas* (fasting)?
 - To starve ourselves... – **WRONG ANSWER!!!**
 - The **correct** answer is to avoid hurting other souls (plants) by consuming them
 - Food has energy in it. But we can live without food if we drink water. Water keeps our kidneys efficient and it has LOTS of energy in it. But we cannot drink regular tap water.
 - So... we must BOIL the water and drink it all within a set period of time.
 - After boiling the water, please be sure to place a lid that has small holes in it OVER THE POT OF WATER while it is cooling (off the gas stove). This is to ensure that the intensity of the steam coming out of the hot water does not hurt the small souls in the air. The holes will still help the steam escape, but at a decreased intensity, and thereby, protect the small bacteria/bugs/insects in the air at that time.
 - We can even live without water sometimes (*Chouvihar upvas*). Sun-gazing is very good for the body. The energy from the sun-rays (only at certain times of the day: EARLY morning and EARLY evening) helps our Vitamin D levels and keeps us from being lazy.
- What about food that is at least one day old (*Vaasi*)?
 - We should not leave any morsels of food in our plate (*Aethu*). It is a sin, it is an insult to the food, and we should realize that many people are living in hunger, so we are fortunate to have

food that is clean and healthy.

- We should not make food to eat later on in the week. Even making food in advance and freezing it or putting it in the fridge is not good. Bacteria are in the fridge/freezer also.
- We should only prepare enough food for the meal – NO more, NO less. In the family, have a set amount of food that each member of the family will consume everyday no matter what. Cooks are good at measuring proper quantities of food.
- If food is leftover by chance, try to share it and/or finish it so that nothing remains. If you are not able to finish the food, you can feed *chapatis/rotis* to the birds, donate to a food pantry, or perhaps your neighbors enjoy home-cooked Indian meals. You can give it to them. Also, remember that there is nothing wrong in eating less by cooking less food.
- If you have to choose between storing food as “leftovers” and throwing the food away, **DEFINITELY STORE FOOD FOR LATER**. Throwing the food away is a waste of time, money, energy, and a huge insult to the plants.
- End of discussion and Manglik: - *Chattari Mangalam*

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