



## RAM NAVAMI MESSAGE 2004

Some people believe in vegetarianism which means avoidance of consumption of the flesh of any species their eggs or any direct by-product. They limit their food to vegetables, fruits, other agricultural products, milk and milk products of different animals. Some of them go to the extent of even avoiding brinjals, onions, garlics, etc. considering them to be as harmful as non-vegetarian products. By some people are stated to be non-vegetarian in nature. Strangely, these people take milk of animals considering it to be vegetarian food. Here is a situation in which one is to believe that onion is not the outcome of a vegetarian plant like banana but the product of an organic body like an egg laid by a hen.

Non-vegetarians believe in eating the flesh of some species, their milk, eggs of birds, etc. Whereas some people claim themselves to be purely vegetarian in food habits, non-vegetarians can never call themselves purely non-vegetarian, since they also take fruits, vegetables and milk etc. Neither any non-vegetarian nor for that purpose any vegetarian person can be said to be pure in the true sense of the term. Food items like cakes, biscuits and many other products available in the market, certain medicines, tonics etc. contain different enzymes and materials from non-human species, as do many of the items that we use on a day to day basis, like creams and soaps which contain animal's fats etc. The vegetarian group belonging to the so called intellectual class of society is fully aware of the inclusion of non-vegetarian elements in the so called harmless vegetarian items. Yet they take these items beholding some traditional or acquired value of vegetarianism. This has always been the case with the intellectual group. It is expediency which justifies every thing. Taking out milk from the mouth of a calf and yet worshipping the cow as a mother is justified on the grounds of expediency. It is expediency which forces the human society to create hybrid varieties of different species of animals and birds ultimately to eat them like chicken or put them into different uses. Most of the demonstrative compassion shown towards animals, birds and other species comes out of this utilitarian mindset of the homo sapiens. The highest compassion to other species in the recorded history of mankind was shown by Mahavira Jain, but how many people understand it and follow it in the right spirit.

Whatever be the justification in killing the members of other species, the mute question is "Does anyone wishes to be killed?" Does any human being wish to be killed and eaten by any other species except in cases of rare psychological predispositions like suicide etc. Will any hen or goat when asked say that it wants to be killed? Have we not observed the pain and terror in the eyes and tremor in the bodies of the animals and birds when they are being slaughtered? When the very man who does not want to be killed at any cost or even to be injured kills an animal, is he not being totally insensitive to the pain of others? This logically justifies the theory that the strong rule or have a moral right to rule and exploit the weak. This is true in the animal world where instinctively the tiger kills the deer as intelligence has not developed in it as in human beings. Once its hunger is quenched, it kills no more till hunger propels it, instinctively again, to kill a prey. The human species, on the other hand, even keep a stock of flesh of dead animals in packed or frozen condition for eating whenever it likes.

The word 'Humanism' (Manav-vada) used by the so called civilised society explains an attitude/act of kindness and understanding towards other human beings to whatever breed they belong. The word 'Manav-vada' does not necessarily include 'Prani-vada'. And this is where the human society falters. The urge to kill animals when further extended as a psychological condition can lead a person to kill other human beings and strengthens the mental trait of violence. Have not we observed that even today human beings are, at times, cruelly killed by other human beings in the manner in which an animal is killed by another animal. Have we not read that in the places where the sages and saints lived, even animals lost their cruel instincts. Why? Because of the non-existence of killer mindset and an attitude of peaceful co-existence of different species. Can't the human species create an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence with the animals. Has not God provided us with enough of agricultural products, fruits, roots, etc. on which human society can subsist!

The question is left open to the reader to decide for himself rationally even if not from the religious or spiritual points of view. A non-vegetarian person may not personally kill or be a part of the process of killing, but he certainly contributes to such killings as a consumer. To appreciate the issue properly, it would perhaps be better for a non-vegetarian person to visit a place where animals/birds are being killed, observe the painful reactions of these harmless species when death is being inflicted on them and then decide whether he should continue to be a non-vegetarian.

The direct experience of things (and not information alone) brings knowledge and creates a conviction whether to do or not do a thing. A progressive man should have direct experience and then decide on the course of action he likes to take. This is truthful living and without truthful living one cannot enter into the path of spiritualism.