



Ahimsa Awakenings: Tales of Compassion

In 2015, I fell into a coma on my birthday. For four days, I hovered between worlds. When I finally opened my eyes, silent tears rolled down my cheeks. I didn't know why—but I knew I had been given a second chance. That moment sparked a shift in me. A deeper desire to live with intention.

Fast forward to today, I've lost over 150 pounds and am thriving physically, emotionally and mentally. But my journey so far wasn't linear.... (Scan the QR code to learn about Mayur Shah's journey)

Discover Ahimsa Awakenings



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Share your story with the wider Jain community.

Cookbooks, nutrition, investing with intention, and more...

Ayaan Ali, who grew up in a traditional Muslim household in Bhopal, is now pursuing a Master's in Jainism at the Arihanta Institute. His passion? Exploring the deep connections between *Ahimsa* and *Reham*—the Islamic concept of mercy—and sharing a message of compassion across cultures.

But Ayaan's journey didn't begin in books. It began with heartbreak... (Scan the QR code to learn about Ayaan's journey as told by Ruchika Chitrabhanu)



"I can say from personal experience that transitioning to a plant-based diet has major health benefits. It is a step forward for our health, other sentient beings, and the planet."

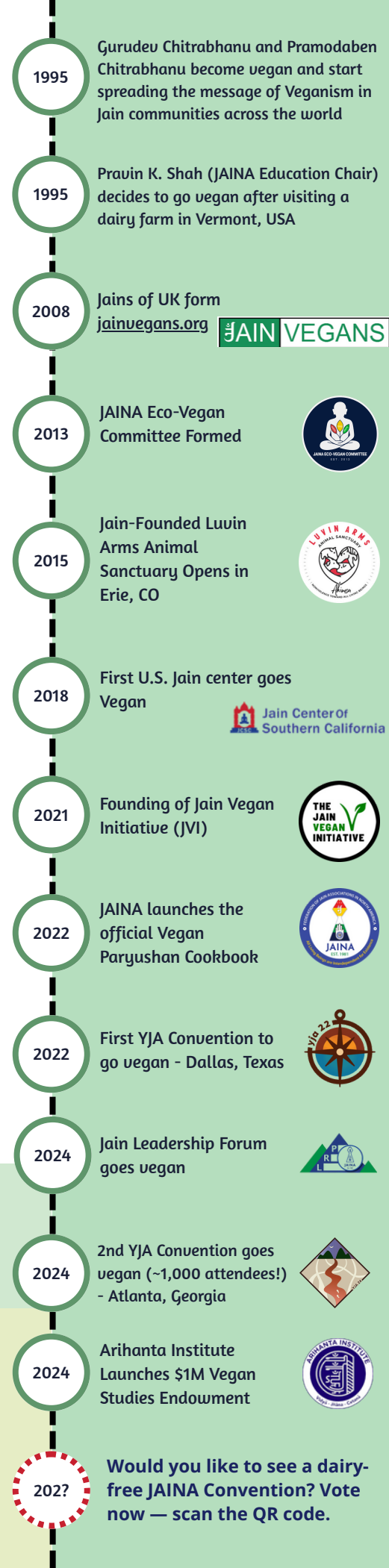
- a message from Bindesh Shah, President, JAINA

"Atmavat sarva bhuteshu sukha dukkhe priya priye chintayann atmano anushtam hinsam anyasya Na charet."

- Acharya Shri Hemchandracharya (1089 to 1173 AD, as stated in his book Yogashastra)

"All souls in this universe are like my soul. As I like to be happy and do not like to be unhappy, all living beings, small or big, like to be happy and do not like unhappiness. Living in this awareness..., I will not cause any harm, pain or hurt to any life mentally, verbally or physically."

- English translation by Pramodaben Chitrabhanu





"Veganism and spirituality often intertwine through the shared principles of compassion, non-violence, and interconnectedness... By living in harmony with nature and respecting sentient beings, veganism becomes a spiritual practice in itself—nurturing the soul while treading lightly on the Earth. It's a path of love in action."

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu & Pramoda Chitrabhanu

Saachi started embracing veganism to translate Ahimsa into daily action. She is a member of her school's MUN club and loves to dance, swim, write and debate. Her secret for being a super-active all-rounder: she maintains good nutrition along with calcium-rich foods like tofu, leafy greens, and fortified plant milks—proving dairy isn't necessary for growing children. When faced with limited options at school events and parties, she confidently brings her own meals.

"Start with small swaps, understand your 'why', and remember it's okay to stand out when you're sticking to your values."

Saachi Choradia | 6th Grade Student | JCNC JAB (Jain Academic Bowl) Team Member



"A vegan diet, focusing on healthy plant-based foods and ensuring adequate B12 intake, can prevent and even treat chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, obesity, high cholesterol, dementia. Some important cancers can be reduced. Not only does it promote longevity, but it also enhances overall quality of life..."

Dr. Tushar Mehta, MD | plantbaseddata.org

Understanding the violence behind modern dairy compels us to act with greater compassion. Choose *vegan* at the 2025 JAINA Convention



Priyanka inspires others with her compassionate cooking - embracing creativity in packing nutrition with flavor. Raised on a Jain diet, a fundamental part of her approach to Ahimsa, she transitioned to a Jain vegan diet after realizing: *"If my purpose is to live as compassionately as possible, including avoiding violence in my Jain diet down to the microscopic level with avoidance of roots, how could I possibly be ignorant towards the pain and suffering endured by these five-sensed living beings?"*

Priyanka Shah, Physician Associate (PA-C) | pinkispalate.com | @pinkispalate

"...I arrived at Jainism through a prior commitment to nonviolence and vegetarianism, and eventually veganism. As a student of both Western and Indian philosophy, I came to view the moral life as one that begins not with the self, but rather with a deep concern for the suffering of others. Hence, my veganism flows from the same currents that animate Jain thought and practice: compassion, nonviolence, and nonpossessiveness. In short, shared values are what bring us together."

Jonathan Dickstein, PhD | Assistant Professor of Jain and Vegan Studies, Arihanta Institute



"Our family's life mission is to inspire everyone to be voices for animals in our everyday lives, and to show how Ahimsa is not just a principle, but a responsibility to our world, through the decisions we make to live more compassionately."

Aarav, Shaleen, Avi, Shilpi | Luvin Arms Sanctuary | luvinarms.org
The baby cow in the picture is Marley Rose

We invite you to discover more!

Scan the QR code on the previous page for the **Jain Vegan Paryushan Community Cookbook**, other resources, more stories and ways to connect with us.





Dr. Jina's upbringing instilled in her a deep respect for Ahimsa, which has guided her personal and professional life. She has presented on veganism at various Jain centers and conventions. As a dedicated practitioner of Ahimsa, she co-authored the Jain Position on the Climate Crisis, suggesting actions for Jains, and developed a Climate Focused Pratikraman for reflection.

"We have a great opportunity as educated Jains to make choices for ourselves and with others that can benefit all living beings."

Dr. Jina Shah, MD, MPH, MBE | veganjains.com

"When we decided to get married, we realized that one of the happiest moments of our lives could cause some of the saddest moments for others. Knowing that cows and buffaloes would be crying for their babies while our parents smiled for us, we couldn't, in good conscience, serve dairy at our wedding and still feel proud of our celebration. Our families worked with the caterers to make a few simple tweaks to the menu. The guests were surprised—and inspired too!"



Dr. Pratik Bhansali and Vinita Dugad | Jain Vegan Initiative (JVI)

let's talk about (vegan) chai

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"I make my classic chai by boiling 3 cups of water, 1 cup of Oat Milk, boiling it again, and then adding 4 tea bags and a freshly grated teaspoon of ginger. My Papaji had tea gardens and he made sure that the tea leaves are not overcooked."

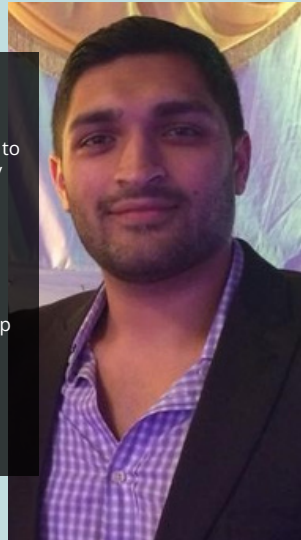
- Pani Shah



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"When I am fortunate to go home and have my Mom's chai, I am reminded once again how Oat Milk Chai is supposed to be - complex, nutty, a bit spicy. Sometimes we even add Gulaab Syrup to make Vegan Kashmiri Chai! "

- Sahil Doshi



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"We make our chai with fresh ginger, cinnamon, and fresh chopped lemon grass. We use Oat Milk or Soy Milk (whichever is handy, as both taste delicious!) Absolutely heavenly taste to start the morning."

- Tejal Kurwa



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"I love to drink chai with Oat Milk, a lot of elaichi, and agave! We also found a new chai mix that we are currently loving called Bollywood Theater Masala Chai Loose Leaf Tea."

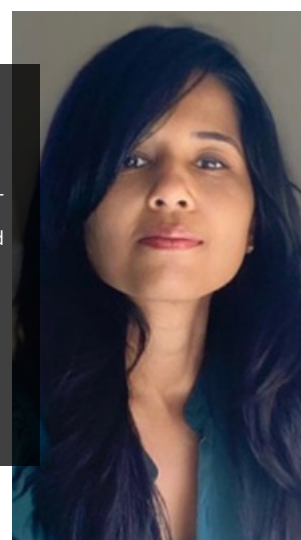
- Dr. Varun Gandhi



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"My Fall/Winter favorite is Hot Chocolate Chai Latte - the same chai, but whisked with one and 1/4 tsp of unsweetened cacao, and 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon. Keep whisking, bring it to boil, and done!"

- Megha Shah



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"Plant-powered comfort in a cup. This vegan oat milk heavenly chai is a guilt-free indulgence, rich in flavor steeped in with lemongrass, mint and spices which is also kind to the planet, no one can deny - I love it!"

- Pravin Turakhia

