

# THE LAND OF AHIMSA

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOLLY VYAS-AHUJA  
BY ANNE CASPARSSON & ILSE SUPPLY



**The Land of Ahimsa** - A documentary about animal cruelty by Gary Yourofsky, completely changed Dolly Vyas-Ahuja's perception and she went vegan overnight. She has recently launched the new documentary *The Land of Ahimsa*, covering the cruel dairy industry in India. As a grand-daughter of a freedom fighter that worked close to Mahatma Gandhi, she can see many parallels between their freedom fight for social justice and liberation in India, and the animal liberation movement today.

Many of us think about India as the land where cows are holy, loved and well treated. But what

many do not know is that India today is the biggest producer of beef and second biggest producer of leather and milk in the world. This is something that Dolly Vyas-Ahuja wants to highlight in her new film *The Land of Ahimsa* that already has gotten the Award of Excellence at the Women's International Film Festival this year.

*The Land of Ahimsa* is a very strong and important film and has been well received in India on the tour she recently came back from. One student walked 90 miles to promote the film at his university. Dolly can see that there is a vegan momentum in India

right now, with many animal rights organizations and more awareness around veganism.



“Many people who see the film want to do something about it and we encourage people to create seminars, a vegan society, show documentaries and create discussions. We are also thinking of making a version that we can show children and educate them as well”, she says.

Dr. Sailesh Rao, The founder of The Climate Healers as well as the executive producer of several documentaries such as Cowspiracy and What the Health, has also been involved in the film, and joined the tour in India. With his expertise, he focused much on the environmental aspect during the tour which made the connection very clear.

Making the connection with her own history It all started with Dolly doing interviews about animal rights and veganism for her YouTube-channel. She started networking with people in India and made a lot of friends among activists. The YouTube-interviews soon became the start of a whole documentary. Making a film about this enormous injustice many of us still are blind for, made her very much make the connection with her own history.

“A vegan world is very much linked to peace. My grandfather was a freedom fighter for justice in India. Me myself is an animal freedom fighter, fighting for the greatest social issue today, which is speciesism”, she says and adds that her purpose is to be a voice for the voice less.

Her grandfather went with Gandhi side by side, was in an Ashram with him, went to jail together as well as went on the Salt march together. She refers to a conversation she had to her grandfather as a teenager, and he asked her: “Are you vegetarian? And do you know what Ahimsa means?”

“Today after my own learning of Ahimsa I understand what he was trying to teach me”, she says.

Dolly can see many parallels between what Mahatma Gandhi and her grandfather wanted to achieve, and what the animal rights movement are fighting for today. It is all about justice from a system that is destructive and extremely unfair.



“The British government was on their knees and asked Gandhi to negotiate with them. It is the same today with our aim to create a vegan world; We need to create a movement that is strong enough to change the industry, just as they did in that time.”

## Ahimsa and spirituality

Spirituality is important for Dolly and something she comes back to several times during the interview. She emphasized her daily meditation under a tree has been a big part of her awakening and her spiritual journey to become a vegan, an animal rights activist and a freedom fighter. She connects with nature, with Mother Earth and with the sky.

“Once you really connect with your spirituality, you cannot bear suffering of others.

It is a beautiful way to wake up”, she says.

Dolly drank milk and ate dairy herself until she understood the hidden backside of it all.

“It is buried in our brains since we are born to drink milk and eat dairy products. Society made animal exploitation normal, natural and necessary. We all grow up this way. We don’t know what is behind the glory of the beautiful ice-cream or yoghurt we buy. The industry hides that from us, until we find out ourselves.”

But once you realize the enormous cruelty behind the dairy industry, it is no turning back, she emphasizes. The whole industry is based on newborn calves being taken away from their mothers, so we can take her milk. In many countries male calves are killed soon after birth, seen as waste products, and the whole separation process is extremely painful for both the cow and the calf.

“Cow’s milk is for her baby and human milk is for human babies. The same as with all animals, like tigers and dogs. It is so simple to understand”, Dolly says.

As a child Dolly always saw cows on the streets. But when she realized how these animals actually are treated, used and abused for our consumption, she was devastated.

“Farmers in India milk the cows twice a day, and then often leave them on the street. They don’t have enough food, water, or land to take care of them otherwise. People don’t know what is going on. How do they get pregnant? Where are all the males? What do we do with the calves? These questions most people do not ask. We just want our milk delivered as usual, which is part of being disconnected about what is going on.”



## To make something powerful of your awakening

Instead of feeling guilty that we have been part of suppressing living beings, we need to use that power into working for change, justice and compassion. Vegans in the world needs to be better in speaking up for the justice and truth, Dolly says. “Transform it into growth instead of staying in the guilt. Then you can make something beautiful out of it. But never justify it. The cow is a mother no

different from me and how dare we steal her milk, her calves and her birthright? Dairy is even worse than beef. We make her pregnant year after year and then steal her baby. Finally she is so weak she cannot even go up the slaughter truck," she says. In India milk is traditionally used for many religious ceremonies in temples as a symbol for love and respect. A tradition very far from Ahimsa culture.

"In India we need to change our relationship to milk, and live in true Ahimsa. We need to give up dairy and use coconut milk or water instead in our ceremonies. Yoga and a vegan lifestyle goes hand in hand. Dairy and beef comes from the same cruelty. If we want to live from the yogic principles of ahimsa, freedom of harm and liberation, we need to be vegans."

Her goal is a Vegan world 2026 and she lives and acts that it already has happened.

"That is why I am always smiling," she says, and smiles with her whole face. "We need to leave an abundant earth for future generations. We need to create a Land of Ahimsa. And the whole world needs to be The land of Ahimsa".

Interview: Anne Casparsson & Ilse Supply

Text: Anne Casparsson



Visit [www.thelandofahimsa.com](http://www.thelandofahimsa.com) to find more information about the film The Land of Ahimsa and Dolly's important work as being the voice for the voiceless.