

# 1 Yoga Teachers on Consuming Animals: Dietary Journeys, Barriers to Veganism, and 2 Negotiating *Ahimsa*

## 3 1 Introduction

4 There is considerable debate in the international yoga<sup>1</sup> community about whether there is a  
5 need for yoga practitioners, and especially teachers, to follow and promote a vegetarian or  
6 vegan diet (Gannon 2008; Dickstein 2017; Rosen 2011; Chapple 2011; Nardini 2011). The  
7 discussion usually centers around different interpretations of the *ahimsa* teaching in yoga.  
8 *Ahimsa* is commonly translated as non-harm, and has strong links with ancient India, and  
9 most notably, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism (Singleton and Mallinson 2017). Singleton  
10 and Mallinson (2017: 80) describe *ahimsa* as one of the main teachings in yoga. Despite the  
11 West's primary focus on the physical aspects of yoga as noted by yoga scholars such as  
12 Singleton (2010) and Jain (2015), *ahimsa* remains a key part of yoga teacher trainings  
13 worldwide within philosophy modules on standard courses such as those of YogaCampus,  
14 Triyoga, and Kripalu.

15 The definition of *ahimsa* as “non-harm” stems from its constituent parts in Sanskrit: “*a*”  
16 meaning absence and “*hims*” stemming from “*han*” meaning to harm, injure, or kill (Chapple  
17 1993: 10). Whilst the term also applies to plants, and sometimes to rocks and elements such  
18 as by strict Jains (Schmidt 2010), for the purposes of this paper, we are focusing solely on its  
19 application to farmed animals. This is due to 1) the scale of harm caused by modern animal  
20 agriculture (Lymbery 2014), 2) the scientific consensus on animal sentience (Proctor 2012),  
21 3) the fact that humans need to consume plants to maintain their health, and 4) fewer plants  
22 and resources are utilized on a vegetarian and vegan diet than an omnivorous diet (Poore and  
23 Nemecek 2018).

24 Since antiquity to the present day, proponents of *ahimsa* have called for vegetarianism due  
25 to 1) the harm inflicted on the animal being consumed, and 2) a belief in mental and spiritual  
26 harm inflicted on the consumer of the animal (Schmidt 2010; Dickstein 2021; Tristram 2006).  
27 Indeed, according to Natrajan and Jacob (2018: 64), India, the birthplace of yoga, has the  
28 highest number of vegetarians anywhere in the world at up to 40% of the population<sup>2</sup>. The  
29 rise of industrial animal farming—and its accompanying ethical, welfare and environmental  
30 problems—has intensified this debate and developed the call for vegetarianism into a call for  
31 veganism by some yoga leaders (e.g., Gannon 2008; Dickstein 2020) and members of related  
32 communities such as Jains (Miller and Dickstein 2021).

33 There is limited scholarship on the views of modern western yoga teachers on the ethics of  
34 consuming animals. Yoga teachers are of intrinsic interest due to the long-standing

---

<sup>1</sup> The word ‘yoga’ stems from the Sanskrit ‘*yuj*’ meaning to yoke (Singleton and Mallinson 2017, xiii). It is a physical, mental and spiritual discipline originating in ancient India. The broader meanings of the term at different points throughout history and within different yoga traditions are diverse and outside of the scope of this paper; see Singleton and Mallinson (2017) for a review.

<sup>2</sup> This figure should be interpreted with caution. Recent scholarship has found that the 40% figure may be overestimated. Furthermore, many of those that do identify as vegetarian or vegan are not fully vegetarian or vegan. Additionally, not all vegetarian Indian citizens will be vegetarian through choice necessarily but for economic/cultural reasons for instance (Staples 2020; Natrajan and Jacob 2018).

35 association of yoga with vegetarianism and the known higher prevalence of different forms of  
36 vegetarianism in modern western yoga communities (e.g., see Penman et al. 2012; Ross et al.  
37 2013). In relation to the UK specifically, Mace and McCulloch (2020) have found that the  
38 proportion of vegan and vegetarian UK yoga teachers is, respectively, 25-fold (29.6% versus  
39 1.2%) and six-fold (19.3% versus 3%) higher than the general population. Their research also  
40 found that 68% of UK yoga teachers deem a plant-based diet as most aligned with their yoga  
41 practice.

42 Moreover, as a similar ethic of non-harm underpins animal rights philosophy, studying the  
43 beliefs and attitudes of modern western yoga teachers might also serve as a case study for  
44 broader western populations regarding how the wider public may negotiate either a belief in  
45 animal rights or animal welfare on the one hand with eating animals on the other hand.  
46 Arguably, the substantial harms caused to farmed animals during rearing and slaughter is  
47 unnecessary given 1) the availability of non-animal protein, and 2) statements from leading  
48 dietetic associations, such as the British Dietetic Association, that humans can live healthily  
49 at all stages of life on a vegan diet (British Dietetic Association 2017).

50 This paper explores UK yoga teachers' beliefs about the moral status<sup>3</sup> of farmed animals  
51 and attitudes toward plant-based diets. It forms the second phase of a mixed-methods study,  
52 using an interview methodology to explore more deeply the findings from the first phase. In  
53 the first phase (Mace and McCulloch 2020), over 75% of UK yoga teachers desired to follow  
54 a plant-based diet, despite only 29.6% actually doing so. As above, this figure is very high  
55 compared to the general population, but less than half of the 75% of UK yoga teachers  
56 expressing a preference to follow a plant-based diet. This qualitative phase of the research  
57 aims to understand, for instance, why such a discrepancy in stated desires and dietary reality  
58 may occur.

## 59 2 *Ahimsa*, Yoga, and Vegetarianism

60 As previously stated, the definition of *ahimsa* as “non-harm” stems from its constituent  
61 parts in Sanskrit: “*a*” meaning absence and “*hims*” stemming from “*han*” meaning to harm,  
62 injure, or kill (Chapple 1993: 10). However, there is significant disagreement regarding how  
63 *ahimsa* should apply to everyday life for a dedicated yogi in relation to consuming animals.  
64 The authors acknowledge, as described by yoga scholar Dickstein (2017), that western yoga  
65 teacher trainings predominantly refer to *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (c. 400 CE) as an  
66 authoritative yoga text. Dickstein also argues that this text mandates vegetarianism. A  
67 detailed account of the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations of *ahimsa* from antiquity  
68 through to the present and for each of the different traditions that embraces the term is outside  
69 the scope of this paper<sup>4</sup>. Of interest here is how modern UK yoga teachers negotiate yogic  
70 teachings, beliefs about the moral status of farmed animals, and dietary choices. It should be  
71 noted though that *ahimsa* is an extensive term covering mental, physical, and soteriological  
72 aspects (Chapple 1993; Schmidt 2010). Next, we will lay out the common discourse

---

This is an accepted manuscript of an article published by Brill in *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture and Ecology*,  
available online at <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-20211211>. It is not the copy of record. Copyright © 2022, Brill.

<sup>3</sup> The moral status of farmed animals refers to the extent to which farmed animals deserve ethical consideration in relation to how they are treated (Regan 1983).

<sup>4</sup> See Chapple (1993) for an overview.

73 encountered in the yoga sphere regarding vegetarianism and *ahimsa* by summarizing some of  
74 the extant formal and informal literature existing on the topics thus far.

### 75 **2.1 Pro-Vegetarian Attitudes Among Modern Yoga Teachers**

76 As evidenced in blog articles such as those by yoga teachers Ivers (2020) and Donnelly  
77 (2020), many yoga teachers believe that killing animals for food when there are other sources  
78 of sustenance available constitutes violence toward animals and is thus counter to the  
79 teaching of *ahimsa*. Yoga scholars also note how the positioning of *ahimsa* as the first *yama*,  
80 or ethical teaching, signifies its importance above all subsequent teachings and how  
81 subsequent teachings ultimately support the fulfilment of *ahimsa* (e.g., Rosen 2011; Dickstein  
82 2017; Singleton and Mallinson 2017). Moreover, one goal of yoga is the liberation from  
83 suffering (Singleton and Mallinson 2017), and many apply this goal to other sentient beings  
84 in addition to themselves.

85 In yoga, nourishment traditionally has the role of supporting spiritual growth on the path  
86 toward liberation from suffering in this mortal physical realm (Rosen 2011). Consuming  
87 animal flesh is typically viewed by a majority of yoga traditions as counterproductive to such  
88 soteriological goals of yoga. This is because meat is considered *tamasic* in nature; it fosters  
89 heavy and sluggish qualities antithetical to spiritual growth rather than the calm and peaceful  
90 qualities conducive to spiritual growth that *sattwic* vegetarian food is considered to foster  
91 (Rosen 2011). It is also because, as international yoga teacher Gannon (2008) suggests, by  
92 harming other beings we are ultimately harming ourselves; negative karmic energies and  
93 unhealthy food are consumed and other beings are harmed who we are spiritually connected  
94 to.

95 Dickstein (2017) notes how Indian vegetarianism<sup>5</sup> or lacto-vegetarianism could be most  
96 aligned with yogic tradition in a textual sense. However, he notes that factory farming—  
97 including the killing of dairy farmed animals—was nonexistent in the times many yogic texts  
98 were written<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the teachings and traditions need to be considered in light of modern-day  
99 injustices and challenges. Indeed, veganism is increasingly being promoted as most  
100 consistent with yogic philosophy by organizations such as Animalia Asana® and Yogific, by  
101 leading teachers such as Sharon Gannon (2008), and by yoga scholars such as Kenneth  
102 Valpey (2020) and Jonathan Dickstein (2021).

### 103 **2.2 Anti-Vegetarian Attitudes Among Modern Yoga Teachers**

104 Several yoga teachers have spoken out about their health struggles whilst attempting to  
105 follow a vegetarian or vegan diet and about their need to orient the teaching of *ahimsa*  
106 primarily toward themselves. For example, in an online news article, yoga teacher Nardini  
107 (2011) has claimed that she is still aligned with *ahimsa* when eating meat produced from  
108 animals reared to higher welfare standards if it benefits her health. In her blog article, yoga  
109 teacher Davis (2016) further suggests it is important for people to listen to their intuitions<sup>7</sup>

---

Indian vegetarianism traditionally excludes eggs as well as animal flesh (Natrajan and Jacob 2018).

<sup>6</sup> In the UK, male dairy calves are typically reared for rose veal, and may even be shot soon after birth. Dairy cows are slaughtered when they become less efficient at producing milk.

<sup>7</sup> The reliance on intuitions in moral reasoning is contested. Intuitionists hold that basic moral beliefs are self-evident (Stratton-Lake, 2020). In contrast, utilitarian moral philosophers, for example, argue that moral

110 regarding what their body needs<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, yoga scholar Jarow (2011) notes that the tantric  
111 yoga tradition encourages the perception of all food as equally pure or impure and that we  
112 must accept the presence of violence in the world.

### 113 2.3 “The Middle Way”<sup>9</sup>

114 Less clear-cut positions regarding *ahimsa* and an accommodation of imperfections can  
115 also be found. Acknowledgement of ethical truth even if an ideal is not achieved entirely can  
116 be seen in comments by Gandhi, one of the most well-known proponents of *ahimsa*. On  
117 consuming goat milk when recovering from illness, Gandhi said “The memory of this action  
118 even now rankles in my breast and fills me with remorse” (Gandhi et al., 2001[1929]: 409).  
119 Jains, who are renowned for applying the principle of *ahimsa* most comprehensively, also  
120 traditionally acknowledge that harms cannot be fully eradicated in life. They do this, for  
121 example, through ritualistic forms of apology for and repentance of harms caused, such as in  
122 the annual ritual *pratikramana* (Donaldson and Willis 2019).

### 124 2.4 Cultural Appropriation

125 Cultural appropriation can include a lack of knowledge among many UK yoga teachers  
126 surrounding the impact of British colonialism on the practice of yoga, which is currently  
127 largely absent from yoga teacher training content. For example, Singleton (2010) describes  
128 how the British Raj belittled and diminished yoga’s presence in India. Thus, after India  
129 gained its independence, there was a revival of yoga with impressions of the British Raj left  
130 on it such as preoccupations with power and dominance. This westernization of yoga could  
131 have led to stricter forms of modern yoga such as Ashtanga and Iyengar.

132 Yoga author Remski (2019) describes how the combination of the effect of British  
133 colonialism on yoga and recent abuse scandals centering around yoga gurus is contributing to  
134 a modern shift away from a purely guru-based prescriptive yoga practice. Dickstein (2020)  
135 subsequently notes how this context, combined with further westernizing of yoga through the  
136 neoliberal, individualist, and capitalist system within which yoga operates, leaves any  
137 mentioning of vegetarianism or veganism vulnerable to being construed as dogmatic or as a  
138 mechanism to dampen the rights, freedom, or happiness of the individual. Thus, a lack of  
139 knowledge surrounding British Colonialism’s effect on yoga could also indirectly mean that  
140 vegetarianism and veganism in western yoga communities are becoming less prevalent  
141 (Nottoohuman 2018).

142 Given that any traditional yogic permissiveness of consuming animal flesh is by far the  
143 exception rather than the rule (Tahtinen 1976: 109), instances of cultural appropriation within  
144 modern western yoga may simply include a direct neglect of vegetarianism<sup>10</sup>, perhaps as part  
145 of a New Age pick-and-mix spirituality (Possamai 2019), or simply due to focusing on the

---

intuitions are unreliable and likely to reflect cultural factors and prejudice. For instance, Singer would argue that grounding the legitimacy of consuming meat on moral intuitions is ultimately speciesist (Singer, 1975)

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that there is no textual basis for *ahimsa* meaning non-harm towards oneself (REF). More often, there is an encouragement towards asceticism and endurance of hardship to avoid harm (REF). Arguably, this reflects the neoliberal, individualistic, westernized societies within which yoga is operating.

<sup>9</sup> “The Middle Way” actually refers to a concept in Buddhism, referring to a balanced path (Bajželj 2017). Similarly, there are notions of attaining balance in modern yoga too.

<sup>10</sup> Or conversely, pushing veganism too strongly, especially onto non-westerners or ethnic minorities.

146 physical practice and neglecting the philosophical teachings altogether. Another aspect of  
 147 cultural appropriation is the feminization of yoga that has occurred due to the heavy  
 148 marketing of yoga toward females<sup>11</sup> (Hodges 2007). This actually mirrors a feminization of  
 149 the western vegan and animal welfare movement (Faunalytics 2014; Allen 2016).  
 150 Conceivably, this could potentially cause an increase in the adoption of plant-based diets  
 151 among modern western yoga teachers.

### 152 3 Quantitative Analysis of UK Yoga Teachers' Beliefs About Farmed Animals and 153 Attitudes to Plant-Based Diets

154 In the first phase of this mixed-methods study, Mace and McCulloch (2020) investigated  
 155 UK yoga teachers' beliefs about the moral status of farmed animals and their attitudes to  
 156 plant-based diets using an online questionnaire (n=446). Table 1 highlights the dietary terms  
 157 used in the first phase that also apply to this second phase. Key results were as follows: First,  
 158 UK yoga teachers have very progressive beliefs about the moral status of farmed animals. For  
 159 example, over 85% agreed that minimizing animal suffering is as important as minimizing  
 160 human suffering.

161 Second, 29.6% of UK yoga teachers follow a plant-based diet. The UK Vegan Society  
 162 (2018) estimated in 2018 that just over 1% (1.16%) of the UK population were vegan, so this  
 163 is a highly significant finding: the proportion of vegans in the UK yoga teaching population is  
 164 around 25-fold higher than the general population. Furthermore, 19.3% of UK yoga teachers  
 165 sampled were vegetarian. This figure is again substantially higher than the 3% of vegetarians  
 166 in the general population (Food Standards Agency, 2017). Additionally, the proportion of UK  
 167 yoga teachers that are vegan (29.6%) is higher than the figure that is vegetarian (19.3%). In  
 168 contrast, the proportion of vegetarians in the general population (3%) is higher than the  
 169 number of vegans (1%).

170 Thirdly, 73.9% of UK yoga teachers desired to follow a plant-based diet. This was  
 171 presumably related to the fourth key finding; over 68% of those surveyed regarded plant-  
 172 based diets as best aligned to their yogic practice. The authors concluded that the far higher  
 173 proportions of UK yoga teachers following vegetarian and vegan diets, compared to the  
 174 general population, were likely to be based on the application of yogic teachings such as the  
 175 principle of *ahimsa* by abstention from the consumption of animal products.  
 176

177 Table 1. Dietary classifications related to the consumption of animal products used in the  
 178 Phase 1 online questionnaire (Mace and McCulloch 2020).

Diet category	Diet	Diet description
Omnivore	Standard UK diet*	Consumes many types of animal product as part of most meals
	Conscientious omnivore	Consumes many animal products according to cultural norms but aims to procure from higher welfare and local sources
	Reductarian	Aims to reduce the consumption of animal products such as meat, dairy, and fish
	Pollotarian	Restricts consumption of animal products to poultry, fish, other marine life, eggs, and dairy products

<sup>11</sup> Compared to the male-dominated practice of yoga traditionally (Singleton 2010).

	Pescatarian	Restricts consumption of animal products to fish, other marine life, eggs, and dairy products
Vegetarian	Vegetarian/lacto-ovo-vegetarian	Restricts consumption of animal products to eggs and/or dairy products
Vegan/plant-based	Vegan Plant-based	Abstains from all consumption and use of animal products Avoids all animal products and aims for 100% plant-based foods

\*The term “Standard UK diet” is a nominal term denoting a diet in which the participant consumes many types of animal product without conscious effort to reduce consumption of animal products or to procure them from higher-welfare sources.

179  
180  
181

#### 182 4 Wider Significance of this Study

183 This research has clear significance for the UK and global yoga community. However, the  
184 research may have far wider significance in a non-yogic secular animal rights context. One  
185 key meaning of *ahimsa* is non-harm, which is grounded in “non-difference of self and others”  
186 (Chapple 1993: 19). A similar basic moral precept underlies all animal rights philosophy.  
187 Pythagoras, the pre-Socratic philosopher, abstained from consuming animals to avoid  
188 harming them. Indeed, in the western world, vegetarians were called ‘Pythagoreans’ until the  
189 mid-twentieth century. Jeremy Bentham famously wrote in 1789 that “the question is not,  
190 Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?” (Bentham, 1789, page xx).<sup>12</sup>

191 Bentham’s famous quotation was included in a mere footnote to his utilitarian text. Peter  
192 Singer, credited with starting the modern secular animal rights movement, developed the idea  
193 in Bentham’s footnote in *Animal Liberation* (1975). Singer argues that it is sentience, not  
194 rationality or other qualities humans might uniquely possess, that is morally relevant. Singer  
195 argued furthermore that the interest in avoiding suffering is equal in nonhuman farmed  
196 animals, compared to that in humans. Singer claimed that treating nonhuman animals,  
197 including those we consume, without equal consideration of interests is “speciesist”,  
198 analogous to the prejudices of racism and sexism. Singer developed his philosophy to claim  
199 that mammals (i.e., including cows, goats, sheep, and pigs) and birds (i.e., chickens and  
200 turkeys) possess degrees of self-consciousness. Related to this, they have preferences to  
201 continue living. Singer ultimately advocates a vegan diet based on modern agriculture  
202 causing widespread harms to sentient farmed animals, both by causing suffering and killing  
203 (Singer, 2011).

204 Regan published *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) in part as a response to Singer’s  
205 *Animal Liberation*. Regan claimed that mammals over one year old are subjects-of-a-life,  
206 based on having beliefs and desires, perception, memory, a sense of the future, an emotional  
207 life including pleasure and pain; preference and welfare interests, and a psychophysical  
208 identify over time. Regan went further than Singer by claiming that subjects-of-a-life have  
209 the basic right to respectful treatment, which ultimately grounded rights against suffering or  
210 being killed. Singer’s utilitarian theory, despite prescribing vegetarianism and veganism  
211 where possible, permitted the trading of human and farmed animal interest. In contrast,

---

<sup>12</sup> Bentham also compares the situation in the Western world, or at least eighteenth century Britain, to India, the birthplace of yoga: “Under the Hindu and Mahometan religions, the interests of the rest of the animal creation seem to have met with some attention. Why have they not, universally, with as much as those of human creatures, allowance made for the difference in point of sensibility?” (Bentham, 1789, page xx).

212 Regan’s theory went further, and argued that farmed animals had an absolute right to  
213 respectful treatment, leading to concrete rights against being caused to suffering and being  
214 killed.

215 Moreover, outside of both an animal rights and yoga context, the UK is renowned for  
216 being an animal loving-nation and progressive in terms of animal welfare. Historically, the  
217 first written instance of the terms vegetarian (1842) and vegan (1944) were in the UK (OED  
218 2012a, 2012b). Furthermore, the American Vegan Society (2020) is formally guided by the  
219 principle of *ahimsa*. Thus, there are recognized connections between western ethical  
220 veganism, based on secular moral philosophy, and *ahimsa*, rooted in ancient Indian religious  
221 belief. The British Parliament passed the world’s first legislation prohibiting cruelty to  
222 animals, Martin’s Act, in 1822. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,  
223 founded in 1824 (RSPCA 2021) was set up to prosecute cases under Martin’s Act, and has  
224 been emulated throughout the world. Mahatma Gandhi became a convinced vegetarian during  
225 his stay in the UK (Gandhi et al. 2001[1929]). Hence, the general public too must negotiate a  
226 societal norm of both consuming animals and valuing kindness to animals—what Loughnan  
227 et al. (2010) refer to as “the meat paradox”.

## 228 **5 Methodology**

229 This research explores UK yoga teachers’ beliefs about the moral status of farmed animals  
230 and attitudes toward plant-based diets. It is part of a mixed methodology study using an  
231 explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach: Phase 1 of the research employed an online  
232 questionnaire and quantitative methodology, the results of which have been described in  
233 Section 3 (Mace and McCulloch 2020). Phase 2 used semi-structured interviews and a  
234 qualitative methodology. This paper reports the findings of Phase 2. The rationale of Phase 2  
235 was to explore some of the key results from the quantitative survey in Phase 1 more deeply  
236 (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The first author is a [anonymized]. The second author is a  
237 [anonymized].

238 The research questions investigated in this research project are as follows:

- 239 (1) What are UK yoga teachers’ beliefs about the moral status of farmed animals?
- 240 (2) What are UK yoga teachers’ dietary habits and attitudes toward plant-based diets?
- 241 (3) What is the relation between UK yoga teachers’ beliefs about the moral status of  
242 animals, their dietary habits, and their attitudes toward plant-based diets?
- 243 (4) What is the relation between UK yoga teachers’ knowledge of animal agriculture,  
244 their dietary habits, and their attitudes toward plant-based diets?
- 245 (5) What barriers do UK yoga teachers experience to transitioning to a more plant-  
246 based diet?

247 Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note how a mixed-methods design can yield results with  
248 maximal validity, reliability, boundedness, and real-world use. Triangulation enables the  
249 strengths of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and multiple research methods, to be  
250 combined and their weaknesses to be off-set or minimized.

251 Yoga teachers rather than yoga practitioners were chosen as the subjects for two reasons.  
252 First, compared to yoga practitioners, we assume that yoga teachers are more likely to have a  
253 deeper understanding of yogic philosophy and related debates in the yoga community such as  
254 on consuming animals. Second, yoga teachers have a role in shaping the development of  
255 modern yoga and can influence a large number of yoga practitioners as also suggested by

256 Cramer et al. (2017). Interview participants were recruited from the 128 questionnaire  
257 respondents in the first phase who had expressed willingness to be contacted for an interview.  
258 Anyone living in the UK who had completed a yoga teacher training qualification of any  
259 tradition could have participated in the original questionnaire.

260 Collins (2010) details six interviews as a minimum. Thus, the first author set a target of 10  
261 interviews based on this recommendation, the resources available, and practice in other  
262 mixed-methods studies in similar fields (e.g., Barr and Chapman 2002; Oakley 2012). With  
263 the target interview sample size in mind, the first author sent invitations by email to 27 of the  
264 128 willing respondents. To capture data from across different groups, the first author  
265 purposively sampled participants based on the dietary category they reported in the  
266 questionnaire.

267 Ultimately, 11 respondents agreed to be interviewed. After four interviews, the first author  
268 began to find emergent themes (see Findings). At nine in-depth interviews across a mix of  
269 dietary categories, there was judged to be sufficient empirical data and information  
270 redundancy to interpret data meaningfully, especially given the subsample nature of this  
271 qualitative phase and when integrating the findings with the results from the first quantitative  
272 phase of the study.

273 Audio-only Skype was used to conduct eight interviews, and one interview was conducted  
274 via e-mail (the interviewee named Saskia). The first author arranged, conducted, and  
275 transcribed all interviews in July 2018. Results from the questionnaire-based Phase 1 of the  
276 research informed the interview guide in Phase 2 (see Appendix A). The Skype interviews  
277 ranged in duration from 22-55 minutes and were recorded using MP3 Skype Recorder  
278 software. The University of Winchester granted ethical approval for conducting the study.

279 The first author transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document after each  
280 interview, replaying the recordings and comparing them to the transcripts for accuracy. Both  
281 authors printed, read, and re-read the transcripts to identify common themes. The authors  
282 agreed on the key themes emerging from the interviews that are presented in the Findings.  
283 The authors restricted the analysis of the interviews to the textual data.

## 284 **5.1 Limitations**

285 A total of nine interviews were completed for the second phase of the research. Further  
286 interviews would have no doubt added to the value of the research by providing further depth  
287 to the findings. Reliability for this research is strengthened by triangulating data with the first  
288 phase of the research, using an online questionnaire (n=446). In the first phase, for instance,  
289 68% of respondents stated that plant-based diets were most aligned with yoga practice.  
290 Despite this, only around 30% of respondents actually followed a plant-based diet. This  
291 research provided depth by investigating this **issue** and similar **findings** from the online  
292 questionnaire. Nevertheless, further research, including a larger sample size, further  
293 consideration of race and ethnicity, is recommended to provide greater insight into this  
294 important research area. Further research should also collect data regarding level of yoga  
295 training completed and regularity of teaching to see if these factors influence the findings.

## 296 **6 Findings**

297 These findings are from the qualitative interview methodology that formed the second  
298 phase of a mixed-methods study as detailed in the Methodology. Table 2 provides a  
299 demographic overview of the interviewees who have been given pseudonyms to aid clarity in



300 this paper. All interviewees identified as female, aside from the reducetarian, who identified  
301 as male. This reflects the female-oriented gender bias in the yoga community in the UK and  
302 other western nations (Park et al. 2015). Of note is that the two interviewees who were yoga  
303 teachers for the shortest duration (Rita and Saskia) followed either a standard UK diet or a  
304 conscientious omnivore diet<sup>13</sup>. There does not seem to be a pattern between type of yoga  
305 taught and diet group with, for example, more strenuous forms of yoga such as vinyasa being  
306 taught by interviewees from all diet groups. The findings below are arranged under the  
307 following seven key themes: (1) dietary journey; (2) the impact of pregnancy, parenthood,  
308 and eating as a family; (3) consuming animals and human health; (4) yogic philosophy,  
309 *ahimsa*, and consuming animals; (5) the moral status of farmed animals; (6) the welfare of  
310 farmed animals; and (7) barriers to transitioning to a plant-based diet.

311

---

<sup>13</sup> Despite this, the chi-squared test of association used in the first phase of this research found no correlation between duration teaching yoga and diet group.

312 Table 2. Demographic information about the interviewees.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	Diet category*	Length of time as yoga teacher	Style of yoga taught	Highest education level
Sammy	Female	35-44	Vegan	4-6 years	Flow, vinyasa, ashtanga	Undergraduate degree
Rita	Female	45-54	Standard UK diet	1-3 years	Hatha, children's	Undergraduate degree
Jill	Female	35-44	Conscientious omnivore	4-6 years	Hatha, Scaravelli, pregnancy	Postgraduate degree
Louise	Female	35-44	Vegan	4-6 years	Vinyasa, aerial	Undergraduate degree
Lily	Female	45-54	Pescatarian	>10 years	Hatha, flow, vinyasa, ashtanga	Postgraduate degree
Beth	Female	45-54	Vegetarian	>10 years	Hatha	Secondary school
Eddie	Male	35-44	Reductarian	4-6 years	Hatha, vinyasa, ashtanga	Undergraduate degree
Charlotte	Female	35-44	Vegetarian	1-3 years	Hatha, flow	Postgraduate degree
Saskia	Female	35-44	Conscientious omnivore	1-3 years	Vinyasa, children's, pregnancy	Postgraduate degree

313 \*See Table 1 for definitions of diet categories.

### 314 6.1 Dietary Journey

315 The interviewed yoga teachers frequently discussed how their diets with respect to  
 316 consuming animals had evolved over time. The dietary journey begins in childhood and is  
 317 influenced by family upbringing. Lily (pescatarian) discusses how her family may have  
 318 positively influenced her choice to become a vegetarian in her teens:

319 *I suppose I started as a child within my family just as a regular meat and vegetable diet, but my*  
 320 *mum was very keen on veg so we had lots of veg anyway then into my teens, primarily for health*  
 321 *reasons more than animal welfare became vegetarian. [Lily: pescatarian]*

322 A further key influence upon yoga teachers' dietary journey related to a growing  
 323 awareness of animal farming in adolescence or adulthood. For example, Eddie (reductarian)  
 324 stopped consuming meat after learning more about what is involved in animal farming on his  
 325 university agriculture course. He stated *"I was exposed to a lot of farming practices and those*  
 326 *kind of put me off [eating meat] a little bit."*

327 Sammy's (vegan) dietary journey to veganism had been greatly influenced by Carol  
328 Adams' *Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990). Throughout her interview she related the oppression  
329 of farmed animals with that of women, which is Adams' key argument in her classic text. In  
330 contrast, Rita (standard UK diet) expressed a wish to transition to a more plant-based diet but  
331 had not yet achieved that goal. She emphasized her approach to diet and yoga as an  
332 intertwined journey: *"I shouldn't be eating it [animal products] as part of my [spiritual]*  
333 *training and philosophy but I do it. It's a journey. I do believe yoga is a journey."*

### 334 **6.2 The Dietary Impact of Pregnancy, Parenthood, and Eating as a Family**

335 Several participants described the powerful yet contrasting impacts that giving birth and  
336 motherhood had on them. Jill (conscientious omnivore) felt justified in eating animal  
337 products after becoming a mother: *"As soon as my son was born, I felt it ethically OK to eat*  
338 *meat ... I felt I'd somehow become part of the circle of life, so it was OK to be part of the*  
339 *circle of death."* However, Sammy (vegan) had empathized with dairy cows and found she  
340 could not consume any dairy products whilst she was breastfeeding. She commented *"I was*  
341 *just horrified of the baby being taken away from the cow and the cow being controlled and*  
342 *having milk forcibly taken."*

343 Many interviewees also reported that their diet was influenced as adults by family  
344 members. For example, Eddie (reducetarian) described how his family's different dietary  
345 preferences had led him toward more consumption of animals:

346 *Since being with my wife and kids, I probably eat more animal products now than I have ever in*  
347 *my life. It's very difficult to have a completely different diet to my family because we plan meals*  
348 *together and eat together. [Eddie: reducetarian]*

349 Similarly, Rita (standard UK diet) described how she had tried to be vegan but found it too  
350 difficult due to being a *"terrible cook"* and the different preferences within the family: *"Every*  
351 *meal I cooked just tasted awful ... I had to give up as my husband's the cook and he doesn't*  
352 *want to be vegan."* In contrast, Beth (vegetarian) detailed how her teenage daughter had  
353 influenced her transition to vegetarianism: *"that was due to ... information my daughter*  
354 *shared with me; she's very keen on finding out stuff, a lot of research on the Internet."*

### 355 **6.3 Consuming Animals and Human Health**

356 Some interviewees reported skepticism about whether fully plant-based diets are  
357 nutritionally adequate. Jill (conscientious omnivore) explained that her decision to return to  
358 consuming animal products was based on *"listening to my body during pregnancy and*  
359 *observing both my health and that of my children."* She went on to describe her belief in the  
360 necessity of all animal products for growing bodies, including eggs, fish, and white and red  
361 meat. She described her belief in the need for animal products at different stages of life  
362 including pregnancy, stressful circumstances, old age, and illness. The belief in the necessity  
363 for growing children to consume animal products was repeated by other interviewees. For  
364 example, Saskia (conscientious omnivore), who had been a vegetarian 20 years prior to the  
365 interview but reverted back to meat eating *"due to illness,"* said *"I wouldn't like to restrict the*  
366 *availability of eggs and dairy products [for my children]."*

367 Beth (vegetarian) added concerns regarding the ability of 100% plant-based diets to stave  
368 off certain conditions: *"I'm 54. I'm very aware that my mum and her sisters started to feel the*  
369 *effects of osteoporosis around the age I am now, so that's something I do watch out for."*  
370 Moreover, Jill (conscientious omnivore) referred to different body constitutions as potentially

371 having different dietary needs: “I also feel that there’s not much discussion out there ... about  
372 the differences between different people, for instance in Ayurveda there are the different  
373 doshic types.”<sup>14</sup>

374 In contrast, Eddie (reducetarian) shared his skepticism over such health claims: “Some  
375 people feel their bodies require animal protein, though I don’t actually believe that that’s  
376 true, I think it’s just they like it.” The two vegan interviewees also expressed confidence in  
377 the ability of 100% plant-based diets to provide sufficient nutrition for themselves when  
378 properly followed. For example, Sammy (vegan) said “The first time ... I was completely  
379 vegan for about six months, and I definitely didn’t do it right ... I was feeling low energy. But  
380 now I definitely do it right because I feel fantastic.”

#### 381 **6.4 Yogic Philosophy, Ahimsa, and Consuming Animals**

382 The dominant view among the interviewees was that a plant-based diet is most consistent  
383 with the yogic principle of *ahimsa* both in terms of non-harm to oneself and to others. Beth  
384 (vegetarian) commented how she perceived the whole principle of *ahimsa* as “caring for  
385 animals, caring for each other, caring for the planet. So yeah, I think a 100% plant-based  
386 diet would be the kindest thing.” Charlotte, a vegetarian of eight years, also explained

387 *It all boils down to ahimsa... I think it would be best to adopt a plant-based diet. I think it would be*  
388 *healthier and I think that’s what yoga’s all about: treating your body like a temple and you can’t*  
389 *really do that if it’s full of things with bad karma and bad energy. [Charlotte: vegetarian]*

390 Sammy (vegan) said if you are on a “yogic or spiritual journey” and become aware of the  
391 principles of yoga and how animals are farmed, you “feel it in your heart” and “know it is  
392 right” to not consume animals. She further related the need for plant-based diets to a  
393 common yoga mantra about the happiness and freedom for all: “you want all beings to be  
394 happy and free, and no one’s happy and free when they’re being eaten ... when they’re being  
395 slaughtered and artificially inseminated.”

396 Louise (vegan) stated “Whatever you’re doing with an animal, if it’s kept in captivity for  
397 our gain, it’s still harming.” She criticized some yoga magazines for including fish recipes.  
398 She also described feeling “let down” by non-vegan yoga teachers posting images on social  
399 media of their food that includes animal products. She further commented “I don’t believe in  
400 preaching to people, but ... we should be influencing people by putting the right information  
401 out there.”

402 In contrast, Jill and Saskia (both female conscientious omnivores) expressed a strong  
403 counter voice to the claim that a plant-based diet is most consistent with *ahimsa*. Jill  
404 understood yoga as “knowledge of the self.” She did interpret the *yamas*<sup>15</sup> (of which *ahimsa* is  
405 one) as “respect for others, including animals.” However, due to her strong health concerns

---

Yoga has close connections to the Asian medicinal system of Ayurveda. In Ayurveda, doshic types refer to different doshas. Doshas are different bodily energy types that are believed to influence each individual’s physiological system (Hankey 2010).

<sup>15</sup> In yoga, the ‘yamas’ refer to a set of teachings known as ethical restraints and they include *ahimsa*. (Singleton and Mallinson 2017).

406 as detailed in Section 6.3 and a belief in embracing the “*dark and the shadow*” alongside the  
407 “*light and fluffy*” elements of life, this did not translate into a 100% plant-based diet for her.

### 408 **6.5 Beliefs About the Moral Status of Farmed Animals**

409 Do farmed animals have a different moral status to humans and other nonhuman animals?  
410 Yoga teachers often had strong views about this question. Some believed farmed animals  
411 should have an equal moral status to other animals and humans. For example, Charlotte  
412 (vegetarian) stated “*No, [farmed animals] don’t have any difference in status to other*  
413 *nonhuman animals. I see animals and humans as living beings, so I don’t differentiate.*”

414 In contrast, Jill (conscientious omnivore) argued that farmed animals should have an equal  
415 moral status to other animals but not to humans:

416 *A wild salmon or a farmed salmon, it’s still a salmon ... I think human beings have a spiritual*  
417 *dimension and spiritual destiny. And I think that animals may have a spiritual dimension and*  
418 *perhaps destiny but that it is not of the same order as humans. [Jill: conscientious omnivore]*

419 Similarly, Eddie (reducetarian) held that farmed animals had a lower moral status than  
420 humans but not to other animals: “*Probably because I am a human, I have a family of*  
421 *humans, and I love my family of humans.*” Related to this, he commented that it seemed a “*bit*  
422 *artificial*” that society is sentimental about dogs and cats but will “*quite happily chop up pigs*  
423 *and eat them.*”

### 424 **6.6 Beliefs About the Welfare of Farmed Animals**

425 Interviewees were highly critical of the impact of modern animal farming on animal  
426 welfare. Conscientious omnivores believed farmed animals raised under natural outdoor  
427 conditions had higher welfare. They also believed it was better for farmed animals to have a  
428 good life rather than no life at all. Jill (conscientious omnivore) stated “*I felt wild fish were*  
429 *more acceptable because they are living a natural life wild in the sea and that being caught*  
430 *by a fishing net ... is not that different from being hunted by a larger fish.*” Imagining being a  
431 cow or sheep grazing in a field, she said “*I would feel I’ve had a good life and I really*  
432 *enjoyed that grass or that view ... rather than not existing at all.*”

433 The more extensive farming systems portrayed by Jill would to some extent be included in  
434 farm assurance schemes in the UK such as the Soil Association’s *organic* certification. When  
435 asked about their understanding of “high welfare,” Jill (conscientious omnivore) praised  
436 organic certifications for higher levels of welfare and Lily (pescatarian) also trusted the  
437 organic label in addition to the “free range” label.

438 In contrast to support for such labels, the vegan yoga teachers interviewed tended to be  
439 critical of food labels indicating higher welfare statuses. For example, Sammy (vegan)  
440 commented “*Even in organic farms it’s still like horrific.*” Louise (vegan) criticized the UK’s  
441 Royal Protection Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA<sup>16</sup>) Freedom  
442 Foods scheme (now RSPCA Assured). Similarly, Beth (vegetarian) expressed a lack of trust  
443 or knowledge in method of production labelling, saying “I do buy free range but ... I don’t

---

<sup>16</sup> The RSPCA Freedom Food/Assured is the leading higher welfare accreditation scheme in the UK.

444 know really if the chickens were free range ... If you have a load of chickens crammed into a  
445 barn ... is that considered free range?”<sup>17</sup>

446 Some interviewees felt that genuinely high animal welfare was unobtainable in animal  
447 farming either because of the practice of killing animals prior to their natural death or  
448 because the demand for animal products is so great that compromises on their welfare  
449 become inevitable. Sammy (vegan) argued that farmed animals should be treated with  
450 complete autonomy: “an animal doesn’t want to die, it doesn’t want to be your food. It was  
451 using its own body itself; it doesn’t need you to come and eat it.”

## 452 **6.7 Further Barriers to Transitioning to a Plant-Based Diet**

453 When asked specifically about what may help the interviewees transition to or maintain a  
454 plant-based diet, the responses reinforced and expanded upon family and health constraints.  
455 Convenience, educational, and social aspects were also mentioned in addition to perceived  
456 conflict with environmentalism.

457 Interviewees commented “*I would like to be more plant-based if my health wasn’t going to*  
458 *suffer*” (Beth, vegetarian); “*It will become easier as and when my children get older ... more*  
459 *time would be nice*” (Lily, pescatarian); “*We could go plant-based tomorrow I guess, but*  
460 *choosing not to if I’m honest cause of convenience and the things that we like. But it does get*  
461 *easier with more people on board*”

462 Concern was expressed by omnivores about being judged harshly by vegans and vice  
463 versa. For example, Rita (standard UK diet) spoke about her difficulty in following a plant-  
464 based diet unless on a yoga retreat. She spoke of feeling pressure and expectation from within  
465 the yoga community for serious yoga practitioners and teachers to be vegan:

466 *Yoga teachers ... sit on their yoga thrones as vegans and I actually admit that I’m not and you*  
467 *know... ooh you can’t say that ... they are so high and mighty and think you can’t be a proper*  
468 *yoga teacher unless you’re vegan. [Rita: standard UK diet]*

469 Saskia (conscientious omnivore) reported that she is only in favor of increasing plant-  
470 based eating, not eliminating animal products. She suggested that more seasonal foods being  
471 available and more awareness of animal welfare issues in farming would help her.

## 472 **7 Discussion**

### 473 **7.1 Family, Parenthood, and Diet**

474 UK yoga teachers spoke of the influence of family and how habits formed in childhood  
475 can be formative for later life. Eating patterns and attitudes toward food that we are exposed  
476 to during our childhood are widely reported in the literature to have a substantial impact on  
477 dietary habits as an adult (e.g., Mikkilä et al. 2005; Pearson et al. 2009). Ruby (2012)  
478 however, has reported how a majority of vegetarians choose their diet rather than being raised  
479 as vegetarian. Similarly, for this research, the vegetarian and vegan yoga teachers were

---

<sup>17</sup> RSPCA Assured (2020) and the Soil Association (n.d.) do have higher welfare standards than the legislative baseline. For example, neither RSPCA Assured nor Soil Association accredit enriched battery cages for laying hens.

480 generally not raised to abstain from the consumption of meat and other animal products.  
481 Some described how they began to question their diets in teenage years and early adulthood  
482 when living away from the family home. This increasing independence means individuals  
483 become more autonomous in food choices and can act on beliefs they have about the morality  
484 of consuming animal products. This journey is echoed elsewhere in the literature including a  
485 study of British practicing vegetarians and vegans by Beardsworth and Keil (1991) and  
486 personal accounts of a transition toward veganism such as that of Foer in *Eating Animals*  
487 (2009).

488 Several participants reported how family constraints as an adult can limit their ability to  
489 follow a plant-based diet due to other family members not also wishing to adopt a plant-based  
490 diet. These constraints include not being a confident cook, the need to cook for the whole  
491 family, and feeling unable to or not wishing to cook a different meal for themselves. These  
492 adult familial constraints elaborate upon the results by Mace and McCulloch (2020) reported  
493 in Phase 1 of this research in which: 1) 31.5% of respondents disagreed with the statement “It  
494 is possible for everyone to consume a plant-based diet” (n=389); and 2) over 28% agreed  
495 with the statement “Singling myself out from my peers, friends and family is an obstacle to  
496 following a plant-based or vegan diet” (n=389).

497 Collectively, the childhood and adult familial influence on diet choice point to how eating  
498 is commonly perceived as a communal activity in society and how people feel pressure to  
499 consume the same food and share food as part of this. Fischler (2011) refers to such  
500 commensality as a cultural attachment relating to a deeply embedded value of sharing food as  
501 a righteous act. It is reflected elsewhere in the literature as partly a mechanism to try and  
502 ensure the propagation of a family’s and community’s values and culture, and as a means for  
503 maintaining social cohesion, intimacy, and order (e.g., Ochs and Shohet 2006; Crowther  
504 2018).

505 Motherhood, particularly in relation to breast-feeding and giving birth, seemed to enhance  
506 the notion of human-animal similarity for some participants, with both vegans and  
507 conscientious omnivores using motherhood to justify their respective perspectives on  
508 consuming animals. This finding of the notion of human-animal similarity being applied by  
509 people of different dietary categories is a reminder that a belief in human-animal similarity is  
510 not always conducive to the adoption of a plant-based diet, as suggested by Amiot et al.  
511 (2017); it can also be applied to justify the consumption of animals.

## 512 **7.2 *Eating Animals and Health***

513 Mace and McCulloch (2020) found that 29.7% of UK yoga teachers agreed with the  
514 statement “A small quantity of animal-derived foods is required for optimal health.” They  
515 also found that holding this view was significantly related to diet group with there being a  
516 greater likelihood of holding this view the more animal products are consumed. Health  
517 concerns about plant-based diets were reported by six of the nine yoga teachers interviewed  
518 in this study across several diet types. Concerns were based on the suitability of 100% plant-  
519 based diets for pregnancy, illness, different health conditions, different body constitutions,  
520 and different stages of life such as for growing children and the elderly.

521 This research reveals that yoga teachers’ attitudes toward eating animals and health are  
522 complex. Often, there is a strong motivation to abstain from consuming animal protein, but a  
523 lack of trust in plant-based nutrition to maintain health. Dietetic institutions, such as the  
524 British Dietetic Association (2017), have proclaimed that 100% plant-based diets can be  
525 nutritionally sufficient for all stages of life. This raises the question of why the yoga teachers

526 interviewed, who were clearly motivated to abstain from consuming animal protein, were  
527 generally skeptical of the sufficiency of a plant-based diet.

528 The first simple reason might be that they were not following nutritional advice rigorously  
529 enough. Some yoga teachers interviewed suggested this possibility, expressing skepticism  
530 about claims that plant-based diets could not provide for a nutritionally complete diet.  
531 Moreover, several yoga teachers admitted that they likely needed more knowledge about  
532 plant-based nutrition. Indeed, there is a broad consensus that it is at least more difficult to  
533 obtain complete nutrition from a 100% plant-based diet, compared to diets containing animal  
534 protein (e.g., see NHS 2018). Even though, in 2021, vegetarian and vegan diets are far easier  
535 to follow in the West compared to recent years (The Vegan Society 2020), maintaining a  
536 100% plant-based diet in particular remains a challenge for many people.

537 Secondly, the yoga teachers might be influenced by the dominant culture of meat  
538 consumption, despite their strong moral beliefs about eating animals. Joy (2010) has  
539 theorized that those consuming meat, so called “carnists,” justify meat consumption based on  
540 the three Ns: consuming meat is natural, normal, and necessary. Thus, the dominant societal  
541 meat-eating culture UK yoga teachers are embedded in could lead to a lack of confidence in  
542 plant-based diets. This could mean such individuals also to some extent believe that  
543 consuming animals is necessary. As Fifield (2019: 276) alludes to by posing the question  
544 “When is a ‘need’ a real need?” it can be difficult to know this in a culture where consuming  
545 animals is normalized and the moral implications of the act trivialized.

546 Alternatively, it could be that the research on which recommendations of some dietetic  
547 bodies are based is incomplete, and plant-based diets are not sufficient for at least some  
548 individuals. The transcripts in this study from highly motivated UK yoga teachers, as well as  
549 the quantitative data in the first phase, suggests this is at least a possibility.

### 550 **7.3 *Ahimsa and Negotiating Beliefs About Consuming Animals***

551 In the first phase of this research, Mace and McCulloch (2020) found that almost one third  
552 (29.6%) of yoga teachers in their study followed a plant-based diet and around one in five  
553 (19.3%) were vegetarian (n=446). These figures are far higher than the wider UK population;  
554 only around 1% is vegan (The Vegan Society 2020) and 3% are vegetarians (Food Standards  
555 Agency 2017). Despite these figures, a far higher proportion, almost three quarters (73.9%)  
556 of UK yoga teachers in the study desired to follow a plant-based diet<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, over  
557 two thirds (68.6%) of those surveyed regarded plant-based diets as best aligned to their yogic  
558 practice. Given these results, a key purpose of the qualitative interviews in this second phase  
559 of the research was to explore how UK yoga teachers interpret the teaching of *ahimsa*, and  
560 how they relate this to their dietary habits.

561 The research found two competing conceptions of *ahimsa*. One group of yoga teachers  
562 (Sammy, Rita, Louise, Beth, Eddie, Charlotte) interprets *ahimsa* to mean minimizing harm to,  
563 exploitation of, and violence toward human and nonhuman others. This conception of *ahimsa*  
564 lends itself to veganism as an ideal. A second group (Jill, Lily, Saskia) interprets *ahimsa* to  
565 mean regard for all life *and* the prioritization of their own optimal health in this lifetime. This  
566 conception of *ahimsa* was more compatible with a stringent application of high animal

---

<sup>18</sup> This figure included the 29.6% that already followed a plant-based diet.



567 welfare rather than veganism. Among this group, there is concern over a “*dogmatic*” and  
568 “*hierarchical*” approach to the teaching of *ahimsa* in many yoga traditions. This western dual  
569 conception of *ahimsa* can be positioned against a backdrop of polarized debates over meat-  
570 eating in modern India. Meat-eating is on the rise in India and there are similar negative  
571 associations of vegetarianism with elitism, dogma and dominance amongst political  
572 progressives in India (Srinivasan and Rao 2015).

573 For yoga teachers, the process of negotiating *ahimsa* through a web of conflicting factors  
574 is complex and nuanced and results in different end points for different people. Some yoga  
575 teachers appear to resolve such conflicts through sustaining at least a variant of  
576 vegetarianism. Some are able to embark upon and sustain 100% plant-based diets and  
577 veganism. Others are comfortable remaining simply as “allies” of veganism (Joy 2018).  
578 Some see humans as more important than nonhuman animals and reject the notion that  
579 *ahimsa* should manifest as a boycott of animal agriculture altogether. Yet others remain  
580 conflicted without resolution and feel guilty but appear to find comfort in other aspects of  
581 modern yoga such as in seeing life, and the aspiration of certain virtues, as a journey.

582 All UK yoga teachers in this study make clear connections between yoga and their dietary  
583 path. Only one interviewee, Jill (conscientious omnivore), emphasized “*other streams in her*  
584 *life*” aside from yoga that contributed to her interpretation of *ahimsa* such as native American  
585 culture. Sammy (vegan) also observed that *ahimsa* had predominantly been taught to her as  
586 caring for oneself. Thus, interviews suggest that some UK yoga teachers do create a cultural  
587 bricolage surrounding *ahimsa*. However, it is difficult to determine how far UK yoga  
588 teachers’ general support for veganism is related to yoga specifically compared to a distinct  
589 culture of secular veganism in society. Indeed, UK yoga teachers could be influenced by  
590 both. Additionally, some individuals who are already vegetarian and vegan may be attracted  
591 to yoga due to its reputation of being associated with vegetarianism and non-harm. **These**  
592 **factors could be investigated in further research.**

#### 593 **7.4 *Ahimsa and Secular, Non-Yogic Animal Rights and Welfare***

594 In the Discussion section of this paper, we covered the following three macro-themes:  
595 “Family, Parenthood, and Diet,” “Eating Animals and Health,” and “*Ahimsa* and Negotiating  
596 Beliefs About Consuming Animals.” The discussion in the first two macro-themes is directly  
597 relevant to *all* those who practice veganism or desire to abstain from consuming or causing  
598 harm to animals. All agents, yogic and non-yogic, must follow their own dietary journey.  
599 They will be influenced by family and many by parenthood, and they must formulate their  
600 own beliefs about the healthfulness of a plant-based diet for them. Furthermore, a large  
601 proportion of those who are vegans, or who aspire to follow a plant-based diet, do so for  
602 ethical reasons; they believe that consuming animals harms those animals as sentient beings  
603 in a morally unjustifiable way. As described in section 4, there is arguably strong similarity  
604 between the *ahimsa* teaching and the basic moral precept within animal rights philosophy:  
605 avoid causing harm (Singer 1975; Regan 1983). Thus, personal dietary journeys, complex  
606 relationships with food, and the need to negotiate the ideal of *ahimsa*, or non-harm, with the  
607 reality of everyday life, are relevant to all those in society who seriously consider the  
608 morality of consuming animals.

## 609 **8 Conclusion**

610 *Ahimsa*, the philosophy of non-harm, remains embedded within modern yoga. Farming  
611 animals for human consumption necessarily causes harm in the rearing and slaughter  
612 processes. For this reason, given the central place of *ahimsa* in the yoga belief system, there  
613 is considerable debate in the international yoga community about whether practitioners  
614 should follow a plant-based diet. This paper reports the results of the second phase of a mixed  
615 methodology study investigating UK yoga teachers' beliefs about the moral status of farmed  
616 animals and attitudes to plant-based diets.

617 Phase 1 of the research employed a quantitative questionnaire-based approach. The  
618 questionnaire phase (n=446) found that UK yoga teachers have very progressive beliefs about  
619 the moral status of farmed animals; over 85% believed that minimizing human and animal  
620 suffering are of equal importance. It also found very high proportions of UK yoga teachers  
621 were vegan (29.6% versus 1.16%) and vegetarian (19.3% versus 3%) compared to the wider  
622 UK population. Phase 1 found that nearly three quarters (73.9%) of respondents desired to  
623 follow a plant-based diet, and over two thirds (68.6%) regarded plant-based diets as best  
624 aligned with their yogic practice. This paper reports Phase 2 of the research, based on in-  
625 depth interviews with UK yoga teachers. Seven themes were identified: (1) dietary journey;  
626 (2) the impact of pregnancy, parenthood, and eating as a family; (3) consuming animals and  
627 human health; (4) yogic philosophy, *ahimsa*, and consuming animals; (5) the moral status of  
628 farmed animals; (6) the welfare of farmed animals; and (7) barriers to transitioning to a plant-  
629 based diet.

630 The research revealed that the yogic teaching of *ahimsa* was a significant influence upon  
631 UK yoga teachers' dietary paths. Two conceptions of *ahimsa*, as applied to consuming  
632 animals, were highlighted. In the dominant view, consistent with Phase 1 of the research, UK  
633 yoga teachers generally believed that consuming a plant-based diet is most consistent with  
634 the principle of *ahimsa*. However, despite these beliefs, many who held this view did not  
635 follow a plant-based diet and veganism. In depth interviews revealed that the dissonance  
636 between moral beliefs and dietary practice often related to views about the necessity of  
637 consuming animals for health. Participants reported this was particularly the case for stages  
638 of life associated with greater metabolic demand, including pregnancy, breastfeeding, and  
639 nourishing growing children. Furthermore, the communal nature of eating often moderated  
640 the views of participants, such that their ideal was to consume a plant-based diet but in reality  
641 this preference was not always shared by family. The interviews also revealed an alternative  
642 belief about the application of *ahimsa* to consuming animals. These participants respected  
643 farmed animals and cared deeply about their welfare. However, the yoga teachers considered  
644 themselves as part of the cycle of life and death and, based on beliefs about the necessity of  
645 consuming animal products for human health or a higher moral status of humans, prioritized  
646 applying the principle of non-harm first and foremost to themselves.

647 This research has obvious significance for informing the ongoing debate within the global  
648 yoga community on the morality of consuming animals and the application of *ahimsa* to diet.  
649 Furthermore, the research arguably has wider significance. Philosophers in animal rights,  
650 such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan, ultimately ground their theories in not harming sentient  
651 beings. Hence, most adolescent and adult humans, as rational and moral agents, must  
652 deliberate about dietary choice with respect to animals. They will be influenced by family  
653 and some by parenthood, but all must formulate their own beliefs about whether plant-based  
654 diets are sufficient to live healthily. Thus, the findings in this research are relevant to all  
655 individuals, yogic and non-yogic, religious and secular, who seriously consider the morality  
656 of consuming animals.

657

658 **Acknowledgments**

659 The authors would like to thank the research participants who gave up their time to inform  
660 this project.

661

662       **References**

- 663       Adams, A. 1990. *Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. 1st ed.  
664       New York, USA: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.
- 665       Allen, C. 2016. “Feminisation: Threat or Opportunity?” *Veterinary Record* 178 (16): 391–93.
- 666       American Vegan Society. 2020. “Ahimsa.” <https://americanvegan.org/ahimsa/>.
- 667       Amiot, Catherine E., Ksenia Sukhanova, Katharine H. Greenaway, and Brock Bastian. 2017.  
668       “Does Human–Animal Similarity Lower the Need to Affirm Humans’ Superiority  
669       Relative to Animals? A Social Psychological Viewpoint.” *Anthrozoos* 30 (3): 499–516.  
670       doi:10.1080/08927936.2017.1335117.
- 671       Bajželj, Ana. 2017. “Middle Way (Buddhism).” In *Buddhism and Jainism. Encyclopedia of*  
672       *Indian Religions*, edited by K T S Sarao and Jeffery D Long, 775–78. Dordrecht:  
673       Springer Netherlands. doi:10.1007/978-94-024-0852-2\_280.
- 674       Barr, S. I. and Chapman, G. E. 2002. “Perceptions and Practices of Self-Defined Current  
675       Vegetarian, Former Vegetarian, and Nonvegetarian Women.” *Journal of American*  
676       *Dietetic Association* 102 (3): 354–60.
- 677       Beardsworth, A.D., Keil, E.T. 1991. “Vegetarianism, Veganism, and Meat Avoidance:  
678       Recent Trends and Findings.” *British Food Journal* 93 (4): 19–24.  
679       doi:10.1108/00070709110135231.
- 680       British Dietetic Association. 2017. “Plant-Based Diet.”  
681       [https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/plant-based\\_diet](https://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/plant-based_diet).
- 682       Chapple, C. K. 1993. *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth and Self in Asian Traditions*. Albany,  
683       NY, USA: State University of New York Press.
- 684       ———. 2011. “Roots, Shoots and Ahimsa: The Jain Yoga of Vegetarianism.” In *Food for the*  
685       *Soul: Vegetarianism and Yoga Traditions*, edited by S. J. Rosen, 117–28. Santa Barbara,  
686       CA, USA: ABC-CLIO.
- 687       Collins, K.M.T. 2010. “Advanced Sampling Design in Mixed Research: Current Practices  
688       and Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioural Sciences.” In *Sage Handbook of*  
689       *Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, edited by A. Tashakkori and C.  
690       Teddlie, 2nd ed., 353–78. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications.
- 691       Cramer, Holger, David Sibbritt, Crystal L. Park, Jon Adams, and Romy Lauche. 2017. “Is the  
692       Practice of Yoga or Meditation Associated with a Healthy Lifestyle? Results of a  
693       National Cross-Sectional Survey of 28,695 Australian Women.” *Journal of*  
694       *Psychosomatic Research* 101 (February). Elsevier: 104–9.  
695       doi:10.1016/j.jpsychores.2017.07.013.
- 696       Crowther, G. 2018. *Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food*. 2nd ed. Toronto,  
697       Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- 698       Davis, Sarah. 2016. “Confessions of a Meat-Eating Yogi.” *Bad Yogi Magazine*.

- 699 <http://www.badyogi.com/blog/confessions-meat-eating-yogi/>.
- 700 Dickstein, J. 2017. “The Strong Case for Vegetarianism in Pātañjala Yoga.” *Philosophy East*  
701 *and West* 67 (4): 613–28.
- 702 ———. 2021. “Their Body, Their Voice: Animal Abuse in Modern Yoga Gastropolitics.” In  
703 *Abuse in Yoga and Beyond: Cultural Logics and Pathways for the Future. Sacred*  
704 *Matters.*, edited by Christopher Patrick Miller. Emory University.
- 705 Donaldson, B., and I. Willis. 2019. “Salvaging Shame, Saving Ourselves.” In *Feeling Animal*  
706 *Death: Being Hosts to Ghosts*, edited by B. Donaldson and A. King, 297–316. London,  
707 UK: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd.
- 708 Donnelly, M. 2020. “Morgan Donnelly.” [https://yogaisvegan.com/blogs/news/morgan-](https://yogaisvegan.com/blogs/news/morgan-donnelly)  
709 [donnelly](https://yogaisvegan.com/blogs/news/morgan-donnelly).
- 710 Faunalytics. 2014. “Study of Current and Former Vegetarians and Vegans.”  
711 [https://faunalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Faunalytics\\_Current-Former-](https://faunalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Faunalytics_Current-Former-Vegetarians_Full-Report.pdf)  
712 [Vegetarians\\_Full-Report.pdf](https://faunalytics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Faunalytics_Current-Former-Vegetarians_Full-Report.pdf).
- 713 Fifield, J. 2019. “Living in Awareness of Animal Death.” In *Feeling Animal Death: Being*  
714 *Hosts to Ghosts*, edited by B. Donaldson and A. King, 257–81. London, UK: Rowman  
715 & Littlefield International Ltd.
- 716 Fischler, Claude. 2011. “Commensality, Society and Culture.” *Social Science Information* 50  
717 (3–4): 528–48. doi:10.1177/0539018411413963.
- 718 Foer, J. S. 2009. *Eating Animals: Should We Stop?* London, UK: Penguin Random House  
719 UK.
- 720 Food Standards Agency. 2017. “The Food and You Survey Wave 4 Combined Report for  
721 England, Wales and Northern Ireland.”
- 722 Gandhi, M. K., S. Khilnani, and M. Desai. 2001. *An Autobiography: The Story of My*  
723 *Experiments with Truth*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- 724 Gannon, S. 2008. *Yoga and Vegetarianism*. San Rafael, CA, USA: Mandala Publishing.
- 725 Hankey, Alex. 2010. “Establishing the Scientific Validity of Tridosha Part 1: Doshas,  
726 Subdoshas and Dosha Prakritis.” *Ancient Science of Life* 29 (3): 6–18.
- 727 Hodges, J. 2007. “The Practice of Iyengar Yoga by Mid-Aged Women: An Ancient Tradition  
728 in a Modern Life.” The University of Newcastle, New South Wales.
- 729 Ivers, J. 2020. “Jessica Ivers, Australia.” *Yoga Is Vegan*.  
730 <https://yogaisvegan.com/blogs/news/jessica-ivers>.
- 731 Jain, A. R. 2015. *Selling Yoga : From Counterculture to Pop Culture*. Oxford, UK: Oxford  
732 University Press.
- 733 Jarow, E.H. 2011. “The Yoga of Eating: Food Wars and Their Attendant Ideologies.” In

- 734 *Food for the Soul: Vegetarianism and Yoga Traditions*, edited by S. J. Rosen, 1–20.  
735 Santa Barbara, CA, USA: Praeger.
- 736 Johnson, RB Burke, and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. 2004. “Mixed Methods Research: A  
737 Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.” *Educational Researcher* 33 (7): 14–26.  
738 doi:10.3102/0013189X033007014.
- 739 Joy, M. 2010. *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism*.  
740 San Francisco, CA, USA: Conari press.
- 741 ———. 2018. *Beyond Beliefs: A Guide to Improving Relationships and Communication for*  
742 *Vegans, Vegetarians, and Meat Eaters*. New York, USA: Lantern Books.
- 743 Loughnan, Steve, Nick Haslam, and Brock Bastian. 2010. “The Role of Meat Consumption in  
744 the Denial of Moral Status and Mind to Meat Animals.” *Appetite* 55 (1): 156–59.  
745 doi:10.1016/j.appet.2010.05.043.
- 746 Lymbery, Philip. 2014. *Farmageddon: The True Cost of Cheap Meat*. London, UK:  
747 Bloomsbury Publishing.
- 748 Mace, J. L., and S. P. McCulloch. 2020. “Yoga, Ahimsa and Consuming Animals: UK Yoga  
749 Teachers’ Beliefs about Farmed Animals and Attitudes to Plant-Based Diets.” *Animals*  
750 10 (3): 480.
- 751 Mikkilä, V., L. Räsänen, O.T. Raitakari, P. Pietinen, and J. Viikari. 2005. “Consistent Dietary  
752 Patterns Identified from Childhood to Adulthood: The Cardiovascular Risk in Young  
753 Finns Study.” *British Journal of Nutrition* 93 (6): 923–31. doi:10.1079/bjn20051418.
- 754 Miller, Christopher Jain, and Jonathan Dickstein. 2021. “Jain Veganism: Ancient Wisdom,  
755 New Opportunities.” *Religions* 12 (7): 1–20. doi:10.3390/rel12070512.
- 756 Nardini, Sadie. 2011. “Om Scampi: A Top Yogi Comes out of the Meat-Eating Closet.” *Huff*  
757 *Post*. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/om-scampi-a-top-yogi-come\\_n\\_242189](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/om-scampi-a-top-yogi-come_n_242189).
- 758 Natrajan, Balmurli, and Suraj Jacob. 2018. “‘Provincialising’ Vegetarianism: Putting Indian  
759 Food Habits in Their Place.” *Economic & Political Weekly* 53 (9): 54–64.  
760 doi:10.1111/j.1365-2265.2012.04479.x.
- 761 NHS. 2018. “The Vegan Diet.” *NHS*. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-vegan-diet/>.
- 762 Nottoohuman. 2018. “Brushing Animals under the Yoga Mat?” *Nottoohuman*.  
763 <https://nottoohuman.wordpress.com/2018/10/01/brushing-animals-under-the-yoga-mat/>.
- 764 Oakley, Jan. 2012. “Science Teachers and the Dissection Debate: Perspectives on Animal  
765 Dissection and Alternatives.” *International Journal of Environmental and Science*  
766 *Education* 7 (2): 253–67.
- 767 Ochs, E., and M. Shohet. 2006. “The Cultural Structuring of Mealtime Socialization.” *New*  
768 *Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 111 (Spring 2006).
- 769 OED. 2012a. “Vegan.”

- 770 ———. 2012b. “Vegetarian, N.”
- 771 Park, Crystal L., Tosca Braun, and Tamar Siegel. 2015. “Who Practices Yoga? A Systematic  
772 Review of Demographic, Health-Related, and Psychosocial Factors Associated with  
773 Yoga Practice.” *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 38 (3): 460–71. doi:10.1007/s10865-  
774 015-9618-5.
- 775 Pearson, Natalie, Stuart J.H. Biddle, and Trish Gorely. 2009. “Family Correlates of Fruit and  
776 Vegetable Consumption in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review.” *Public  
777 Health Nutrition* 12 (2): 267–83. doi:10.1017/S1368980008002589.
- 778 Penman, Stephen, Marc Cohen, Philip Stevens, and Sue Jackson. 2012. “Yoga in Australia:  
779 Results of a National Survey.” *International Journal of Yoga* 5 (2). India: 92–101.  
780 doi:10.4103/0973-6131.98217.
- 781 Poore, J., and T. Nemecek. 2018. “Reducing Food’s Environmental Impacts through  
782 Producers and Consumers.” *Science* 360 (6392): 987–92. doi:10.1126/science.aaq0216.
- 783 Possamai, Adam. 2019. “New Spiritualities in Western Society.” *Oxford Research  
784 Encyclopedia of Religion* 26 (April): [online].  
785 doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.217.
- 786 Proctor, Helen. 2012. “Animal Sentience: Where Are We and Where Are We Heading?”  
787 *Animals* 2 (4): 628–39. doi:10.3390/ani2040628.
- 788 Regan, T. 1983. *The Case for Animal Rights*. Berkeley, CA, USA: The University of  
789 California Press.
- 790 Remski, M. 2019. *Practice and All Is Coming: Abuse, Cult Dynamics, and Healing in Yoga  
791 and Beyond*. Kindle. Rangiora, New Zealand: Embodied Wisdom Publishing Ltd.
- 792 Rosen, S. J. 2011. “Burger or Buns: A Brief Look at Whether a Yogi Should Be a  
793 Vegetarian.” In *Food for the Soul: Vegetarianism and Yoga Traditions*, 21–32. Santa  
794 Barbara, CA, USA: Praeger.
- 795 Ross, A., E. Friedmann, M. Bevans, and S. Thomas. 2013. “National Survey of Yoga  
796 Practitioners: Mental and Physical Health Benefits.” *Complementary Therapies in  
797 Medicine* 21 (4): 313–23. doi:10.1016/j.ctim.2013.04.001.National.
- 798 RSPCA. 2021. “Our History.” <https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/whoweare/history>.
- 799 RSPCA Assured. 2020. “Farm Animal Welfare.” [https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/farm-  
800 animal-welfare/](https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/farm-animal-welfare/).
- 801 Ruby, Matthew B. 2012. “Vegetarianism. A Blossoming Field of Study.” *Appetite* 58 (1):  
802 141–50. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2011.09.019.
- 803 Schmidt, H-P. 2010. “The Origin of Ahimsa.” In *The History of Vegetarianism and Cow  
804 Veneration in India*, edited by W. Bollee, 94–127. London, UK: Routledge.
- 805 Singer, Peter. 1975. *Animal Liberation*. 1st ed. London, UK: Penguin Random House UK.

- 806 Singleton, M. 2010. *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*. Oxford, UK:  
807 Oxford University Press.
- 808 Singleton, Mark, and James Mallinson. 2017. *Roots of Yoga*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- 809 Soil Association. 2020. “Organic Animal Welfare.” Accessed July 10.  
810 <https://www.soilassociation.org/organic-living/why-organic/better-for-animals/>.
- 811 Srinivasan, Krithika, and Smitha Rao. 2015. ““ Will Eat Anything That Moves ”” *Economic*  
812 *and Political Weekly* L (39): 13–15.
- 813 Staples, James. 2020. *Sacred Cows and Chicken Manchurian: The Everyday Politics of*  
814 *Eating Meat in India*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- 815 Tristram, Stuart. 2006. *The Bloodless Revolution: Radical Vegetarians and the Discovery of*  
816 *India*. London, UK: HarperPress.
- 817 Tahtinen, Unto. 1976. *Ahimsa: Non-Violence in Indian Tradition*. London, UK: Rider and  
818 Company.
- 819 Teddlie, C., and A. Tashakkori. 2009. *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand  
820 Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications.
- 821 The Vegan Society. 2020. “Statistics.” <https://www.vegansociety.com/news/media/statistics>.
- 822 Valpey, K. R. 2020. *Cow Care in Hindu Animal Ethics*. Cham, Switzerland: The Palgrave  
823 Macmillan Animal Ethics Series.
- 824
- 825



826 **Appendix A**

827 **Exemplar interview questions**

828 **Warm-up question**

- 829 • In your own words, could you describe the kind of diet that has dominated throughout  
830 most of your life? Has this changed over time?

831

832 **Yoga teachers' attitudes towards plant-based diets**

- 833 • What do you think a typical evening meal might consist of if plant-based?  
834 • What concerns, if any, do you have regarding the consumption of plant-based diets (e.g.,  
835 health, environmental, ethical)?  
836 • Are your views about the plant-based diets different to your views about vegetarianism? If  
837 so, how?  
838 • Can you think of anything that may have influenced your attitudes towards plant-based  
839 diet?  
840 • Do you think a plant-based diet is most compatible with the theory, practice and teaching  
841 of yoga?  
842 • Would you support a gradual shift in British society towards a 60% reduction in animal-  
843 based products and can you explain your answer?

844

845 **Yoga teachers' beliefs about the moral status of farm animals**

- 846 • Do you believe farm animals have a different moral status to humans and other non-  
847 human animals, and if so, in what ways? And what are these beliefs based on?  
848 • What, if anything, do you think is missing from the concept of “high welfare” regarding  
849 the treatment of farm animals in the UK? OR what do you understand by the term? (or  
850 visualizing optimal welfare possible in UK and what missing)  
851 • Do you believe it is possible to safeguard high welfare for farm animals if we all continue  
852 to consume animal products at the current average rate in western countries?  
853 • Farm animals are a very diverse group spanning cows, pigs, fish, chickens, goats and  
854 others. Do you find some uses of some animals more acceptable than others?  
855 • In the UK, it is common practice both in factory farming and organic farming for male  
856 chicks to be gassed or grinded to death, and for people to have complete control over the  
857 sexual practices and breeding of most farm animals? Can you share some thoughts on this  
858 with me? (in line with high animal welfare?)  
859 • Can you think of anything that has influenced or helped to shape your beliefs regarding the  
860 moral status and treatment of farm animals?

861

862 **Is there a relationship between yoga teachers' beliefs about the moral status and**  
863 **treatment of animals and yoga teachers' attitudes towards plant-based diets?**

- 864 • Do you think your beliefs about the moral status or treatment of farm animals influence  
865 your attitudes towards plant-based diets?

866

867 **What could help you to transition to or maintain a plant-based diet?**

- 868 • How, if at all, has your yoga practice, teaching, and/or training affected your beliefs about  
869 the moral status and treatment of farm animals? Has your practice, training and teaching  
870 affected your attitudes towards plant-based diets at all?
- 871 • The results of the survey suggest that the vast majority of yoga teachers would like to  
872 follow a plant-based diet but that the majority do not currently; do you think the yoga  
873 community (yoga institutions, trainers, and other leaders) could or ought to do anything to  
874 help yoga teachers with this?
- 875 • Regardless of your current views about plant-based diets, thinking creatively as if in a  
876 world of magical powers, what, if anything, would facilitate your transition or continued  
877 commitment to a plant-based diet?