

an EVEN exclusive interview – with **Dr. Sailesh Rao**



**Founder,
Climate
Healers**

Dr. Sailesh Rao has over three decades of professional experience and is the Founder and Executive Director of [Climate Healers](#), a non-profit dedicated towards healing the Earth's climate. A systems specialist with a Ph. D. in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University, **Dr. Rao** worked on the internet communications infrastructure for twenty years after graduation. During this period, he led the transformation of early analog internet connections to more robust digital connections that also ran ten times faster, at 1Gb/s.

In 2006, he switched careers and became deeply immersed, full time, in solving the environmental crises affecting humanity. **Dr. Rao** is the author of two books, **Carbon Dharma: The Occupation of Butterflies** and **Carbon Yoga: The Vegan Metamorphosis**, and an Executive Producer of four

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documentaries, The Human Experiment (2013), Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret (2014), What the Health (2017), and A Prayer for Compassion (2019).

Dr. Rao is a **Human, Earth and Animal Liberation (HEAL)** activist, husband, dad and since 2010, a star-struck grandfather. He has promised his granddaughter, Kimaya, that the world will be largely Vegan before she turns 16 in 2026, so that people will stop eating her relatives, the animals. He has faith that humanity will transform to keep his pinky promise to Kimaya, not just for ethical reasons, but also out of sheer ecological necessity.

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**Going vegan is about coming home to who you are.**

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EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Sailesh: I was raised lacto-vegetarian and stuck to it for the vast majority of my life until 2008, when I saw the devastation in the forests of Rajasthan, India, due to animal grazing and turned vegan on the spot. This forest was at the edge of the Thar desert and in the village of Karech, the local people had protected 250 acres of common land by erecting a stone fence that kept out the farmed animals. The protected area was lush green while the remaining area was barren land and I saw old dairy cows walking around eating any green shoots that were growing out of the ground.

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At that point, I realized that as an ethical lacto-vegetarian, I had a huge impact on the ecosystems of the planet, perhaps even more than an omnivore, since I didn't want dairy cows to be slaughtered when they ceased to be productive. I had been pretending they can be milked humanely without hurting anyone. Boy, was I mistaken!

EVEN: Who was an influential person in your life earlier on that led you to veganism?

Sailesh: In 2007, I attended a talk by Dr. Will Tuttle in California on The World Peace Diet and he got me thinking about veganism. At that point, I was very concerned about the environment and did a scientific literature survey on the impacts of dairy production. These scientific papers claimed that dairy consumption had negligible additional impact on the environment compared to a strictly plant-based diet and I, therefore, did not turn vegan immediately. It took me another year to understand that I had been misled by some creative accounting which apportions the environmental impact of raising cows between their dairy, hamburger, leather, gelatin and other "outputs."

EVEN: What, in your opinion, is the most misunderstood idea about veganism?

Sailesh: The most misunderstood idea about veganism is that it is just a dietary choice. A vegan world necessitates political, social and economic systems of normal nonviolence.

Veganism is an ethical stance that is truly revolutionary in our current political, social and economic systems of normalized violence.

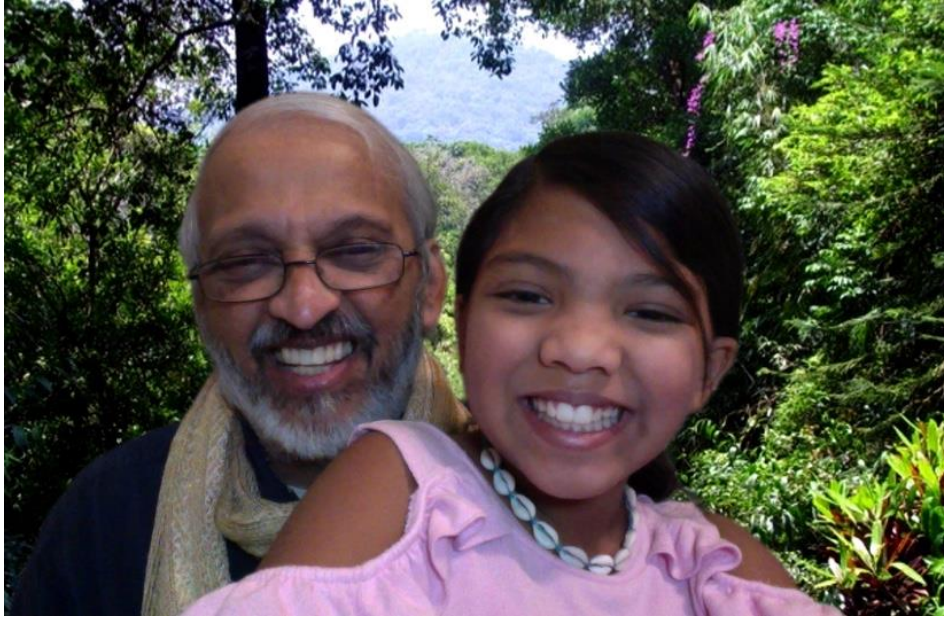
EVEN: What do you think makes veganism hard for people?

Sailesh: Social pressure makes veganism really hard for people. Those who go vegan are considered outsiders in our society where it is normal to possess, enslave and exploit animals for the false pursuit of happiness.

EVEN: What one thing from your thinking in childhood do you wish you could change?

Sailesh: The one thing I wish I could change from my thinking in childhood is the idea that we need to consume animal foods for our protein and calcium intake. These lies were, and still are, embedded in our science text books.

I wish that our education system had better integrity than deliberately lying to our children. I consider it a crime against humanity to deliberately lie to our children.



Therefore, I have pledged to our granddaughter, Kimaya, that I will never, ever lie to her and that she can always count on me to tell her the truth about anything.

EVEN: If you were to mentor a younger person today, what guidance might you offer? What encouraging words might you share with a newbie?

Sailesh: I tell younger people that they are in the midst of the greatest transformation in human history in which systems of normalized violence will crumble and be replaced with equivalent systems of normal nonviolence. Nonviolence is normal for human beings, whereas violence has to be deliberately normalized with horrific fairy tales during childhood and incessant violence in wars, movies, video games and television screens.

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EVEN: What advice would you give to a vegan advocate wanting to become more of an activist?

Sailesh: Find your unique gift and see how you can deploy it towards vegan advocacy.

Every vegan is already an activist through their healthy, radiant existence, but each of us can always do more to bend the arc of our moral universe towards a vegan world.

Indeed, nature is indicating that we must create a largely vegan world by 2026, or risk our own extinction and therefore, it is time to get active.



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EVEN: Do you have a favorite vegan meal or food you can tell us about that really makes veganism work for you?

Sailesh: My favorite vegan meal is our traditional South Indian dish of steamed, fermented lentil-rice cakes called idlis, and a spicy lentil vegetable soup called sambhar.

This meal is very popular in our home and our granddaughter, Kimaya, considers herself to be an "idli monster."

On one occasion, when she was just 6 years old, she consumed 72 mini idlis in one sitting, double what I normally consume in a meal!



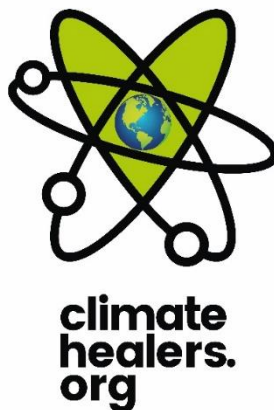
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EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Sailesh: The one thing that makes veganism worthwhile for me is that I feel physically, mentally and spiritually in alignment with who I really am. I consider going vegan as a journey home to our true inner selves.

EVEN: Any opinion or insight on the future of veganism in today's world?

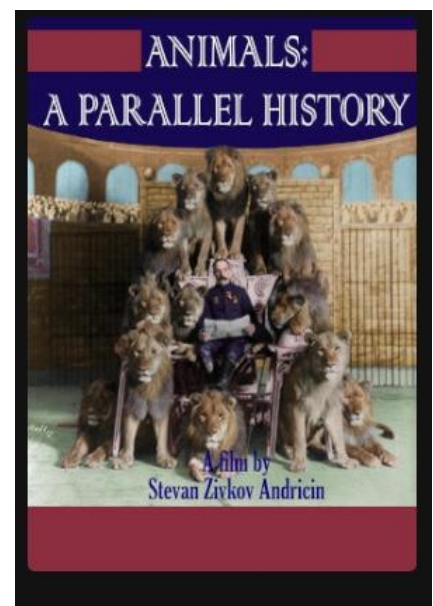
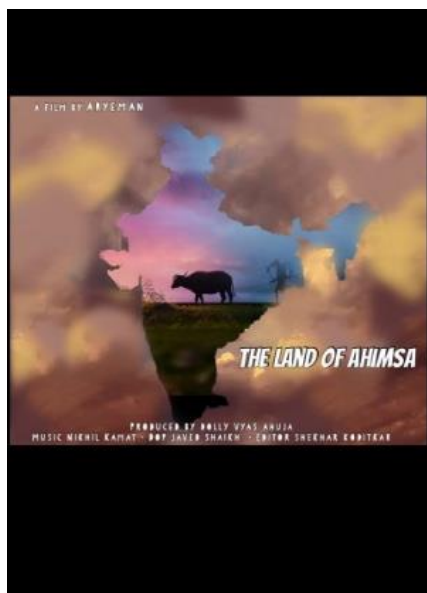
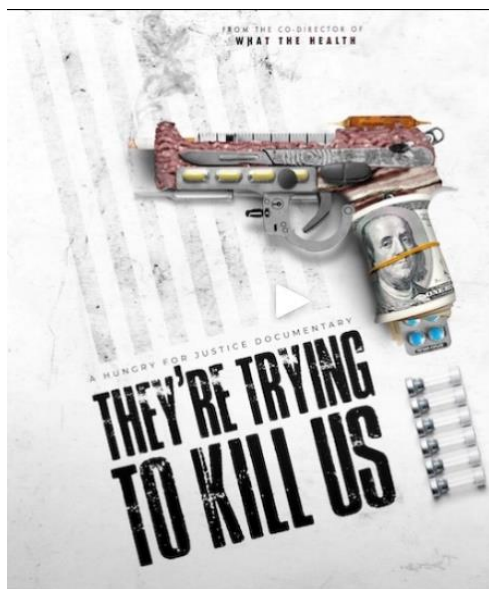
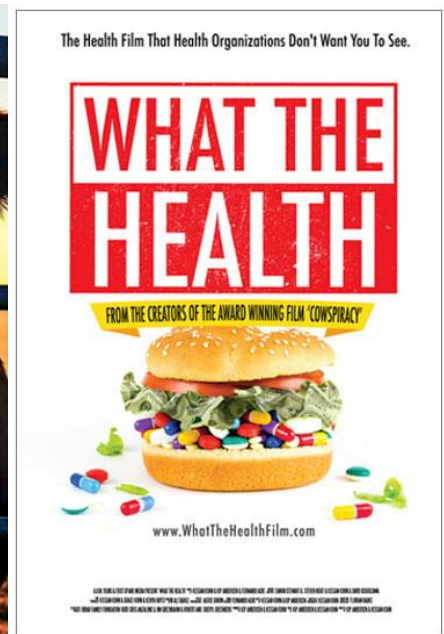
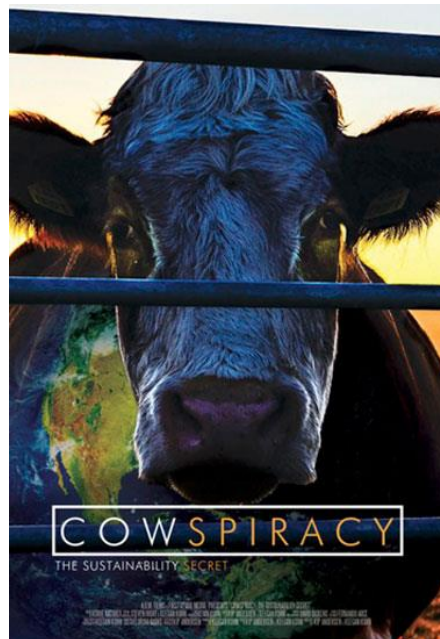
Sailesh: I have absolutely no doubt that the world will be largely vegan within the next 5 years, by 2026, out of sheer ecological necessity. The exponentially-growing deterioration of the earth's climate and ecological systems call for an exponential growth in veganism and I have faith that my fellow humans will rise up to the challenge.



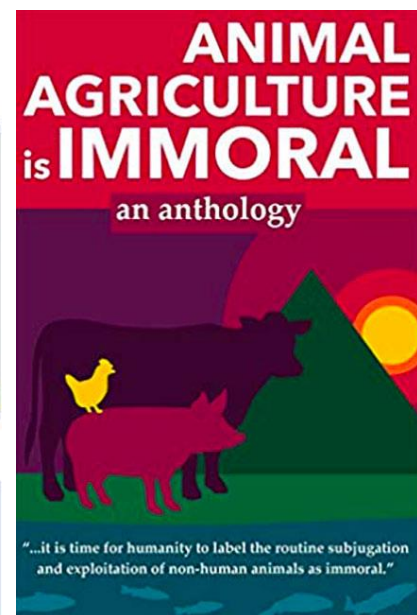
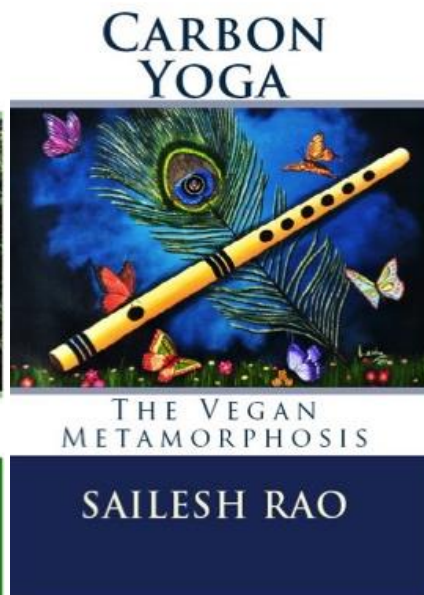
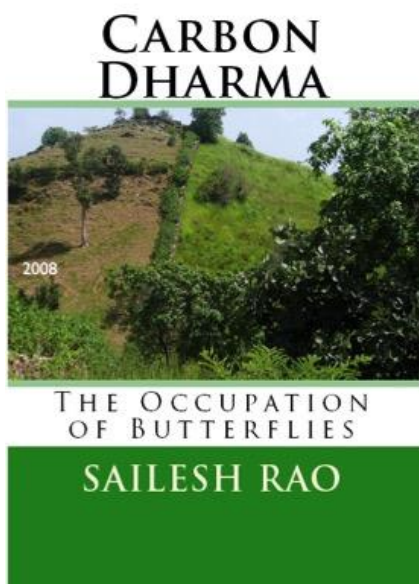
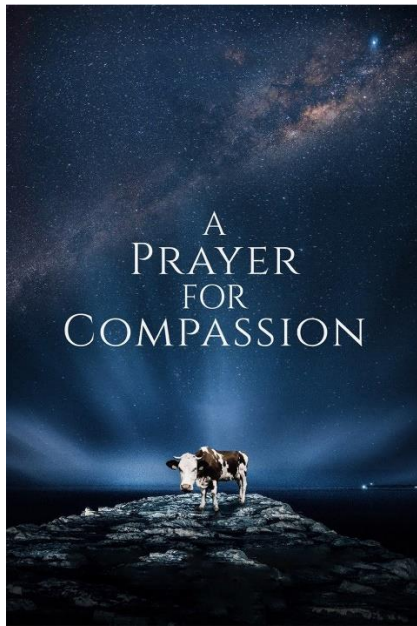
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See Dr. Rao's Other Books and Documentaries below.

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