

board on one condition—that they give up the sacrifice.

#### **What other prospects did you propose?**

One thing I proposed that they liked is to set up a museum where we can put everything that is documented about Gadhimai as a sacrifice, a tradition, as a part of culture. Visitors can come and see, they can talk about their traditions and culture, but it remains in a non-violent way, as a reminder of what Gadhimai was and all the transformation we were able to achieve. The building of a school is part of the deal; I'm in negotiations with the Indian embassy about it. We're taking very careful steps, but there are certain things that I believe we can do and we must do.

#### **What can people in the U.S. do to help?**

Once we have reached an agreement that we see as viable and reasonable, we plan to share it with the world, and we will need fundraising. It will be a fixed amount and properly audited, to set an example, so everyone sees how a global partnership can result in a wonderful end to a disaster.

#### **What other issues are you facing in Nepal?**

The issue that worries me most is the commercialization of meat products. Poultry farming is getting really, really scary. Pig farming is on the rise—it's because of the exposure to commercialized animal products. Nepal's economy depends on people going abroad for work, which is where they

get that kind of exposure. People who didn't have any idea about what sausage was 10 years ago, now they know about sausage, ham, salami and all of those kinds of things. We still have a long way to go before we amass anything like factory farming, but it's growing and that's a genuine concern. In the U.S. and in Europe, people are more focused on phasing out what's already there. We are trying to stop it from happening.

#### **What inspired you to care about animals?**

I really don't know. I was 7 years old when I first learned about Jane Goodall and since then I've been following it. I was unknowingly an animal tormentor, actually, because I wanted all different kinds of animals close to me. I was 9 years old when I captured my first snake; I was 11 when I caught my first cobra. It's amazing I'm still alive, actually [laughs]. It took some time before I realized that it was wrong, and with some parental guidance, my vision is what it is now.

#### **With the other animal welfare issues in your country, what drives you to continue to work to stop the sacrifice at Gadhimai?**

As long as this keeps happening, anything else you do [as an animal advocate] doesn't make any sense. Any person who is concerned about humanity, any person who is concerned about animals—if that person had stood like I stood in 2009 at Gadhimai, you could not have worked any way but the way I've worked.

## IN GOOD FAITH

### THE HSUS DHARMIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL LEADS BY EXAMPLE

**WITH THEIR SHARED** principles of compassion and nonviolence, The HSUS and the Dharmic religions make a perfect match.

"There are just so many natural synergies with this community," says Christine Gutleben, HSUS senior director of faith outreach. "We're all sort of wondering why we didn't do this sooner."

The HSUS Dharmic Leadership Council, which launched last year as an affiliate of the organization's Faith Advisory Council, has 12 members who represent Dharmic religions such as Hinduism and Jainism.

Members of the council and Hindu American Seva Communities met with leaders from the U.S. government in October at the White House to discuss the Humane Cosmetics Act. The council also encourages meat reduction by reminding the Dharmic community of its dietary traditions, spreads word about the achievements of The HSUS and helps advance the work of Humane Society International's office in India.

Gutleben says the council's prestigious credentials—members include doctors, scholars and corporate and religious leaders—give The HSUS insight into how to strengthen its relationships in the medical, faith and business communities, and ultimately help more animals.

"It's wonderful for us," she says. "They provide really strategic and invaluable guidance."

**+ LEARN MORE** at [humanesociety.org/faithcouncils](http://humanesociety.org/faithcouncils).



In one of the nonviolent traditions of the Gadhimai Festival, people ring bells to call worshippers to pray.