

YOGI AND HIS DIET

Food alone is the basic need of for living of an ordinary man. But food alone is the hindrance to progress in the spiritual field. The two contradictory statements will be true when you go to the details. Here food includes both solids and liquids including water.

Minimal glucose level in the blood is necessary to meet energy for functioning of body with its systematic organs including brain. But we cannot take glucose straight away all throughout the life. When we take food to convert into glucose, and other basic nutrients, so much unwanted stuff is being accumulated in spite of being eliminated through excreta like urine, motion, sweat and breath. In addition to energy delivered from food, so many intermediate products are being utilized for tissue building of the body. But there is accumulation of impurities also in the body, which in turn hamper the regular functioning of all the systems starting from digestion, excretion circulation, respirations and so on. An ordinary man can't put his brain into this mishap due to lack of knowledge and he won't find time when he is suffering with miseries. But a spiritual truth seeker will have to peep into his body about what is happening to him.

Annadoshena Chittasya Kalushyam Sarvada Bhaveth Kalushekrutha Chittanam Dharma Samyak Nabhasathe

(Because of food only mind is becoming spoiled and the spoiled mind can never realize God.)
Intake of proper food, proper digestion and proper utilization of energy are fundamental steps to be followed by a spiritual aspirant.

Hithamu, Mitahmu and Ruthamu are the main principles of diet intake. Hithamu means taking of pleasing *Satvik* diet without corrosiveness and balancing with all nutrients. Mithamu means optimum quantity of diet. Filling stomach with two forth with solids, one forth with liquids, one forth with air for peristaltic movements of the stomach. Rutham: Timely taking food which encourages the secretion of digestive enzymes. Our digestion is mainly based on the movements of the sun in the space. It is maximum when the sun is over the head, I e after noon, because of

sun's more intensity of heat. It will be minimal early in the morning and at the sunset. So, it is preferable to take full meal at mid noon and Tiffin both in the morning and in the evening.

Just like Sun seen in the space, there is another sun in our stomach, who is called *vyswanara* or the *Jatharagni* or *Hiranya Garbha*. It is nothing but our prana shakthi alone. An ordinary man depends on external sun for his digestion where as a yogi increases his jatharagni by his yogam. He can convert his diet into energy to the maximum possible extent.

Kukshe tishthati yasyannam yogabhyasena jeeryate
(Food in the stomach will be digested by yogabhyasam)

A yogi will start his spiritual progress by observing diet principles.

Godhuma Mudga salyannam Kheerajya bhojanam yoga vrudhikaram
(Wheat preparations, green grams, cow milk and ghee are helpful and energetic for yogam)

Regarding water intake, most of the people and yogis fail here. Most of the medical practitioners of allopathy, naturopathy advocate to take more water and impress the patients and sadhakas also that intake of more water will clean away all the impurities through urine and sweat. For a lay man it looks genuine, but there is unseen danger lurking inside the body i.e. accumulation of more water in the body.

How more water accumulates and what is the danger out of it?

Water requirements depends upon so many factors. More water is necessary in

1. Hot atmosphere
2. Excess body strain in agricultural labourers, workers and sportsmen
3. Pregnancy
4. Children
5. Diarrhea
6. Constipation due to various reasons
7. Spicy food and fatty food intake.

In rest of the other than these conditions, water intake may be minimum. In these conditions two and half liters of water per day is enough, which includes liquid food also.

God has given thirst and appetite according to the need of water and diet. We can fulfill them accordingly. But irrespective of conditions prevailing and irrespective of thirst and appetite most of the people have got a notion that “more water intake will encourage more digestion and more filtration through kidneys”. Before contradicting this statement we have to explain in detail.

Suppose if you put some dry firewood into a stove, you will get very good flame without leaving any residue. But if you put some wet fire wood into the same stove, you will get smoke and no proper flame. We get smoke due to water content in the fire wood. The smoke contains impurities like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, water vapour, etc. so, water is the main cause for the improper ignition and production of impurities. Likewise, we have got stomach which is both stove and cooker also. When the food is being cooked in a pan or cooker, if you pour more water in the middle, the curry will be spoiled in its taste and fuel consumption will be more. Beneath the liver, we have got gall bladder, the very purpose of which is to concentrate the bile 100 times than the normal bile. So, God’s intention is that for proper digestion of fat, concentrated bile is necessary for which he created gallbladder. But contrary to this, if we go on taking more water, irrespective of need and timings, the digestion will be impaired and at the same time we get more impurities just like CO_2 , CO , etc. in the smoke. These impurities are acids, which in turn increase thirst, which in turn requires more water. So, more intake of water will lead to formation of impurities and ultimately thirst for further more intake of water. This is the vicious cycle. If you enter into this dangerous vicious cycle, the blood becomes more and more acidic and ultimately the energy delivered out of food will be little and food and water intake will be more. Most of the people are entering into this cycle. They themselves and others who are observing them also become sarcastic that "we are very weak in spite of taking more food and water".

If you observe from a distance, that most of the obese and fatty persons will be going on taking more water in spite of being drowned with sweat and more urination. They are the persons who say that “we are weak inspite of taking more food and water”.

With the above findings, we have to say that our digestion of food is by the concentration of enzymes (jatharagni) but not by diluting them with more water. This is the reason why the persons who are dieting are not in a position to reduce their weight because they are not limiting their water intake.

A person who is doing correct pranayama can control thirst first by his gushing of more blood to hypothalamus in the brain, thereby reducing, inhibiting of the thirst centre. The first and foremost experience of a yogi is that sudden reduction in thirst but more urination because of his more blood circulation to the kidneys. This will result in reduction of weight (less thirst and more urination) and becomes slimmer and energetic because he is driving out all impurities. So, yogi alone can reduce thirst and appetite also. Though not a yogi, at least one should not enter into the vicious cycle by taking more water. Why I am impressing on this point is that water intake is necessary for the body, but at the same time first we should keep it in mind that water accumulates more than we excrete due to improper digestion with acid formation by intake of more water.

Regarding diet intake by a yogi, the diet should be always hot and freshly prepared, which will yield more energy and it will be helpful to his yoga also. The body should be always kept warm by taking hot liquids alone. For a beginner, there should be a gap of minimum for 2 hours between food and sadhana. A yogi should see that minimum food is necessary and in due course of time his food intake itself is a hindrance for his sadhana when his sadhana is progressing.

**na tasya rogo na jara na mrtyuh
praptasya yogagnimayam sariram
(svetasvatara upanishad)**

**sarvo yogagnina deho hyajadah sokavarjitah
jadastu parthivo jneyo hyapakvo dukkhado bhavet
(Yoga Shikhopanishad)**