

Food and Mind

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Abstract

The objective of this review article is to describe the difference effects of vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods in body and mind.

“As the food so is the mind” goes the ancient saying signifying that food is an essential ingredient in creating us. The nature of our diet impacts how we think and therefore crucial to what we become. In many religions where non-violence is regarded as a high principle, non-vegetarian diet is strictly forbidden not only just because it causes pain and suffering to other living creatures but also because it is the source of vicious thoughts and attitudes to its consumers. In other words, non-vegetarian lifestyles, a way of living where vices dwell comfortably. The trend of consumption of flesh by human beings is a pointer to several notions. It highlights the way we look at other organisms and our desire to overpower them. It symbolizes our inflated ego that brings our feeling as human as the centre of the universe. It presents our desire to cultivate nature for our gains. We rear the baby got so lovingly for one day to kill. It suggests a belief system that justifies violence in the name of need and necessity. No peace marches, diplomatic dialogues and conferences can bring peace to the planet when we are burdening it with desperate (hopeless) cries of helpless creatures. For what we sow, so shall we reap (Rajyoga Education and Research Foundation, 2009).

Introduction

Several studies have suggested that human body is not naturally designed to digest and assimilate non-vegetarian food. Most physicians recommended a healthy vegetarian diet to patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases among other lifestyle disorders. Other researches clearly point out that when an animal is killed for meat, it feels fear, anxiety and pain, its hormonal secretions are then passed on to its consumers. Such diet is therefore unhealthy both for the body and mind. And then there is a big question mark on health condition of animals that we are ready to make our food. They are kept in the filthiest conditions and handled without mercy (BK Jagdish, 2008).

In respecting and care for our body our diet requires deep consideration. Apart from the moral aspect and karmic implications of killing and eating other

animals, a vegetarian diet is recommended. While many people fear they will not get enough protein from a vegetarian diet; there are now hundreds and thousands of vegetarians who have survived and thrived on a meatless diet throughout the life. The protein myth is the recognized as a marketing ploy (trick, strategy). We, everybody know that power is measured in horse power, surprisingly horse diet is strictly vegetarian. It also justifies that meat is not necessary to be the powerful one. It has been said, “there is enough for human’s need, but not for human’s greed.” consumerism does not allow the world’s poor from being properly fed, even when the planet has sufficient resources to feed them. The problem is not one of supply but of the economic self-interest which prohibits more equitable distribution. Americans, for instance, comprise five percent of the world’s population but use 30 percent of the world’s resources and 25 percent of the world’s

annual consumption of fossil fuel. One third of the world's grain harvest is fed to animals in order to produce eggs, milk and meat for the American style of diet. If everyone were to switch to a vegetarian diet, it would allow another billion people to be fed (Kaul, 2015).

Many animal sympathizers recommended humane methods of animals slaughter. But the contention is what can be more inhuman than nourishing an animal to kill it one day. It is a breach (violate) of morality by all standards. What is crueler than subjecting generations of animals to a life of stifling (oppressive) captivity that only leads them to a merciless end. And what is crueler than killing animals in front of each other. While one is bleeding to death, the other watches in horror and waits for its turn. It is a great pity that even sympathetic humans are left with such little kindness that all they can think of its designing a better way to kill. Vegetarianism is on the rise and has been for decades. This is a sure sign that many are questioning the need to take the lives of animals in order to be healthy. It's hard to enter onto the spiritual path and become more aware without at least calling into question this way of eating. We all strive to minimize harming others and causing suffering (Megan, 2015).

Iron and zinc are currently the trace minerals of greatest concern when considering the nutritional value of vegetarian diets. With elimination of meat and increased intake of phytate-containing legumes and whole grains, the absorption of both iron and zinc is lower with vegetarian than with non-vegetarian, diets. The health consequences of lower iron and zinc bioavailability are not clear, especially in industrialized countries with abundant, varied food supplies, where nutrition and health research has generally supported recommendations to reduce meat and increase legume and whole-grain consumption. Although it is clear that vegetarians have lower iron stores, adverse health effects from lower iron and zinc absorption have not been demonstrated with varied vegetarian diets in developed countries, and moderately lower iron stores have even been hypothesized to reduce the

risk of chronic diseases. Premenopausal women cannot easily achieve recommended iron intakes, as modified for vegetarians, with foods alone; however, the benefit of routine iron supplementation has not been demonstrated. It may be prudent (practical) to monitor the hemoglobin of vegetarian children and women of childbearing age. Improved assessment methods are required to determine whether vegetarians are at risk of zinc deficiency. In contrast with iron and zinc, elements such as copper appear to be adequately provided by vegetarian diets. Although the iron and zinc deficiencies commonly associated with plant-based diets in impoverished nations are not associated with vegetarian diets in wealthier countries, these nutrients warrant attention as nutritional assessment methods become more sensitive and plant-based diets receive greater emphasis (Hunt, 2003).

In the developed western world, the largely meat eating countries have stringent (strict) laws when it comes to treating a pet. The laws ensure that if the pet is hurt, the owner can even be imprisoned. On the other hand, tens of thousands of animals are killed everyday for food and yet no one goes to jail. It is ironic that so many animal lovers continue to be non-vegetarians because they are unable to connect with the cruelty that goes in the making of such food. The consumption of non-vegetarian diet is equally harmful for the environment. Meat consumption yields much lesser energy than when the crops are consumed directly by humans. Simply put it incurs (invites) a double load on nature.

Since time immemorial, vegetarian food has been advocated as being complementary to spiritual practice. But probably many of us are still looking for more concrete scientific evidence to comprehend that meat eating is unhealthy for the body and mind, that it perpetuates non-vegetarian lifestyles and is disastrous to the ecological balance. But why does our conscience need a rational argument, sanctioned by a research institute in the West to realize that killing other living creatures is a form of cruelty? Why do we need facts and figures to understand that cruelty can never be a bringer of any form of health

to be in mind, body or the environment? That it can not sustain peace and harmony in the world. Do we not realize that a heart that heaves no sight at the sight of violence can not be source of compassion for other fellow men? How do we expect people who do not nurture the feeling of kindness for other living beings to nurture feelings of brotherhood and forgiveness for their own community? How do we hope such compartmentalization of values to establish harmony in the world? We are only working on one path while seeking another's destruction (Samant, 2009).

It has been said, "there is enough for man's need, but not for man's greed. Consumption does not allow the world's poor from being properly fed; even when the planet has sufficient resources to feed them. The problem is not one of supply but of the economic self-interest which prohibits more equitable distribution. Americans, for instance, comprise five percent of the world's population but use 30 percent of the world's resources and 25 percent of the world's annual consumption of fossil fuel. One third of the world's grains harvest is fed to animals in order to produce eggs, milk, and meat for the American style of diet. If everyone were to switch to a vegetarian diet, it would allow another billion people to be fed. In another words, the billion who are currently without enough to eat, will able to feed (Brahma kumaris, rajyoga education and research foundation, 2009).

Some points related to the food are:

Preparation of Food

Loveful, pure, powerful thoughts, during cooking, are the vital invisible ingredients to make tasty food rather than varieties of spices. That means the knowledge of amazing recipes is not key is not the key to becoming a great cook. It is the amount of love, care and attention we pay to the activity at hand. The relationship between the mind and the body is delicate. Caring for our body helps to keep our mind pure and free from wasteful or negative thoughts. While preparing food, any thought vibration present will have an effect on food. A regular meditator

makes certain that he/she has the most elevated thoughts, centered on the Supreme. This purifies the food. It keeps impure vibrations from outside at bay. Physical hygiene is a also of course essential.

Food Consciousness

Not only does our consciousness affect the food, but the type of food we eat will affect the mind. Just as alcohol or intoxicating drugs affect the mind and the faculty of judgment, so too everything we eat will affects us either slightly or very deeply. Each individual should find out which kind of diet is suitable for them, bearing in mind these categories of food. Pure foods mostly vegetables, fruits, beans, grains, milk and milk products, moderate amounts of herbs and spices are best for both physical and mental health. Foods which stimulate the mind and are taken in moderation are excessive spices, radishes, coffee, tea, colas, vinegar. Foods that are harmful to the mind should be avoided; are meat and poultry, onions garlic, spring onions, chives, leeks etc, eggs, alcohol, drugs other than medicines, food which is fermented, stale, spoiled or kept for too long.

Eating Habits

Be simple. It is important to eat a balanced diet, varying the types of foods eaten and choosing from the major food groups rice, bread, cereals, vegetables and fruits, nuts, grains, dairy products and fats and oils. We need not be either extravagant or scanty. Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly and wait in between mouthfuls. Hurried meals can cause indigestion and may lead to over-eating. Unless we relax while eating, we won't release enzymes essential for digestion. So all the nutrients will pass, straight through us. Many well fed people can be malnourished due to stress. Good nutrition begins with digestion. Eat a substantial amount of fresh raw food and avoid overcooked and processed foods. Eat at fixed time (Brahma kumaris, rajyoga education and research foundation, 2009).

Although the eating habit depends upon the personal like and dislike; we all should consider the health

consequences of food. Our food directly and equally affects both the body and mind. It is most important to take foods which keep the mind calm, cool and peace; they are fruits, beans, grains, milk and milk products. It is said that concentration is decreased by nonvegetarian diet so the most of the scientists were/are vegetarian. On the other hand, thoughts, during preparation of food, are most important matter. While preparing food, any thought vibration present will have an effect on food. Loveful, pure, powerful thoughts are the vital invisible ingredients to make tasty and healthy food rather than varieties of spices. Similarly; we should consider our eating habits. We should relax during eating to release enzymes essential for digestion. Conclusively we can say that not only quality and types of food is required for both mental and physical health but also thoughts during preparing and eating foods is most important. Even a simple consideration can promote our health and prevent diseases.

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