

Vegetarian – Why to be or Why not to be?

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Different types of vegetarians exist these days. One who eats dairy products but not meat, fish and eggs (Lacto-Vegetarians), one who does not eat meat or fish but consumes eggs and dairy products (Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarians), one who does not eat meat, but eats fish, eggs and dairy products (Pescatarians), one who consumes eggs but no dairy products (Ovo-Vegetarians) and finally (Vegans) who does not eat any animal product including honey. In addition, some people call themselves Flexitarians/Semi-vegetarians (i.e., eating as per their whims and fancy). However, what is common among all these vegetarians is their focus and emphasis on plant-based healthy nutritious diet. Eating meat according to scientific thought is not an absolute requirement for getting all the essential nutrients necessary for good health. In fact, a person eating a plant-based vegetarian food generally have a higher life expectancy, with better health, is more active without risk of obesity or type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer hypertension and other heart ailments. Today people become vegetarians either because of some compulsory health requirements, due to ethical, ideological, religious, ecological reasons (as producing vegetarian foods is far more ecologically sustainable causing lesser damage to the environment) or for enhancing overall personal health.

Human body and Preferred Diet

A scientific long-term study among 38,000 people show that non-meat eaters i.e., vegetarians have a lesser risk of developing cancer, a lower Body Mass Index (BMI), healthier cholesterol levels, lower levels of low-density lipoproteins (LDL) or the “bad” cholesterol that causes clogging in coronary arteries, even though they had a higher incidence of colon cancer. The study further confirms that more one consumes meat the higher their risk of having type 2 diabetes. Vegetarian foods have high fiber and lower saturated fat content and a diet with appropriate planning is not only nutritionally healthy to provide sufficiently suitable health benefits during all human life cycle stages (starting from pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, young athletic age, older adulthood and senior people) but also good enough to prevent and treat certain lifestyle diseases. Meat eaters becoming a vegetarian may not bring in immediate benefits, though it would help in improving the overall lifestyle coupled with regular exercises and total avoidance of smoking and drinking alcohol.

The human body design system mechanics is appropriate for vegetarian diets and not for consuming meat. Herbivores and humans sweat and have enzyme Ptyalin in their saliva. Carnivores do not sweat nor do they have Ptyalin. Humans have approximately 28-foot-long (8.5 meters) coiled up intestine very similar to other vegetarian animals unlike carnivorous animals, indicating that the diet most suitable for humans is vegetarian. According to Professor Dr. G. S. Huntingen of Columbia University, carnivores eat meat, that have low fiber and high protein mass. Nutrients present in meat absorb quickly unlike those present in a vegetarian diet and therefore intestines of carnivores are shorter than herbivores. Moreover, human intestinal walls are not smooth but convoluted due to which the flesh we eat remains for longer time in the intestines, putrefying and creating cancer causing toxins, unnecessarily burdening the liver to eliminate them. Regularly burdening the liver leads to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Urea and Urokinase protein (28 gm/kg) in animal flesh are enough to burden the human kidneys and destroy its basic functions over some time.

Saturated fats and cholesterol in meat is one major cause of cardiovascular diseases. Lack of cellulose fiber in meat causes constipation, piles, etc., leading to rectal cancer. Scientific experiments indicate that scorching and roasting animal flesh produces ‘Methylcholanthrene’ a powerful chemical carcinogen that causes bone tumors, blood and stomach cancer. Antibiotics,

steroids, growth hormones and other drugs, are generally given directly to animals or added to their feed. Humans eating animals absorb these chemicals thereby diminishing drug effectiveness for therapeutic use later during a medical emergency. World renowned scientists, conclude that eating a right mix of vegetarian food items, comprising sprouts, boiled and fermented foods and proper cooking to maintain its nutritional values increases the food quality and is a complete diet. Milk and milk products have enough proteins, calcium and vitamins, beneficial even for heart patients; it reduces cholesterol levels in human blood and works as an antidote to several toxins. Fiber rich vegetarian food provide minerals and vitamins, prevent constipation and its associated ailments like piles, appendicitis, hernia, hepatitis, varicose veins, etc., protecting one from kidney stones and other heart problems through reciprocated shared action of bilirubin and cholesterol.

Vegetarian’s Endurance & Strength

Yale University Professor Irving Fisher’s experiments with selected people on holding their arms out for as much time as physically possible amongst 32 vegetarians and 15 flesh eaters demonstrate that vegetarians have more endurance to pain than meat eaters. In case of 15 non-vegetarians only 2 of them were able to hold out their arms for 15-30 minutes. Amongst the 32 vegetarians, 22 of them held their arms out for 15-30 minutes, 15 of them above 30 minutes, 9 of them for more than 1 hour, 4 of them above 2 hours and 1 person was able to hold out his arms for more than 3 hours.

स्वमांसं परमांसेन यो वर्धयितुमिच्छति ।

नारदः प्राह धर्मात्मा नियतं सोऽवसीदति ॥ १२ ॥

– श्रीमहाभारत, अनुशासनपर्वणि, ११५

Dharmaatma Narada says, "One's who eats others flesh to increase their own, ends up in pain and suffering." 12
- Mahabaratha, Anushashan Parva, 115

नाकृत्वा प्राणिनां हिंसां मांसमुत्पद्यते क्वचित् ।

न च प्राणिवधः स्वर्ग्यस्तस्मान्मांसं विवर्जयेत् ॥ ५-४८

– मनु स्मृति

Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures; and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to the attainment of heavenly bliss, so shun the use of meat. (5.48)
- Manu Smriti

Dr. J. D. Krag, a vegetarian food supporter says, that his findings show that several vegetarian people are far more intelligent, gentle but physically strong and are better sportsmen than meat eaters. Bulls, buffaloes, elephants, horses and rhinos are vegetarian but are still strong. Lions (Kings?), tigers, leopards and jackals are not that strong despite always eating meat. The lion is eternally afraid to attack an elephant from the front always attacking it from the behind. Dr. Barbara More, aged 56 years, a vegetarianism expert, finished a 110-mile race in 27 hours and 30 minutes breaking most records of younger athletes. She says, “I want to be an example to show that people who take a whole vegetarian diet will enjoy a strong body, a clear mind and a purified life”. The World Health Organization recommends that daily around 4.5% calorie intake should come from protein. Wheat has 17% calories as protein, rice has 8% and broccoli has 45%. **Isn't this not a protein rich diet?**

यावन्ति पशुरोमाणि तावत्कृत्वो हि मारणम् ।

वृथापशुघ्नः प्राप्नोति प्रेत्य जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥ ५-३८

– मनु स्मृति

As many hairs as the slain beast has, so often indeed will he who killed it without a (lawful) reason suffer a violent death in future births. (5-38)

- Manu Smriti

पितृमातृसमायोगे पुत्रत्वं जायते यथा ।

हिंसां कृत्वावशः पापो भूयिष्ठं जायते तथा ॥ १२ ॥

– श्रीमहाभारत, अनुशासनपर्वणि, ११४

Father and mother unite to give birth to a child, likewise, persons killing and eating meat have no options but to take birth in lower cursed yonis (non-human forms) of life again and again.

- Mahabharatha, Anushashan Parva, 114

मां सः भक्षयिताऽमुत्र यस्य मांसमिहाद्म्यहम् ।

एतन्मांसस्य मांसत्वं प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ॥ ५-५५

– मनु स्मृति

"Me he (mam sah)", will devour in the next (world), whose flesh I eat in this (life); the wise declare this is the real meaning of the word 'flesh' (mamsah) - 5.55

- Manu Smriti

Vegetarianism and Spirituality in Indian culture

Vegetarianism arguably, is ancient India's greatest gift to the universe largely coming from her basic cultural desire of not harming animals and complying with their right to live. The Hindu law of Karma, believes that all human actions including food choice have "Karmic" consequences and that anyone eating animal meat, would have to themselves experience similar suffering as inflicted on the creatures during inevitable future births.

The food a human body consumes not only affects emotions and experiential consciousness in the mind but also puts anger, jealousy, anxiety, suspicion and fear of terrible death, that are entrapped into the flesh of animals killed, affecting the person's spiritual progress. Since ages India's eternal wisdom about the art of nourishing the body, mind and soul, is an inspiration to food philosophies across the world. A vegetarian way of life has always been widespread in India, right from the earliest Vedic texts and documents by ancient travelers like Megasthenes (Greece), Fa-Hsien, (Chinese) proves it without ambiguity. The Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagavat Gita, The Manu Smriti, Upanishads, Shrimad Bhagavatam (Purana), etc., all advise us to eat only vegetarian foods and avoid eating animal flesh and meat products. Maharajah Parikshit, the great king of yore says, "An killer of animals can never enjoy any communication with Dharma or absolute truth". The Vedas have a low view on people killing animals and eating

आखांदन्नमुदक्षच भावदोषेण मानवः ।

योऽनुमोदति हन्यन्तं सोऽपि दोषेण लिप्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

– श्रीमहाभारत, अनुशासनपर्वणि, ११५

A person who does not eat flesh, but supports others in eating it, has to share the sin of eating due to association; Likewise a person who does not kill but supports killing of innocent animals for meat has to suffer the sin of killing.

- Mahabharatha, Anushashan Parva, 115

meat, including a strict ban and punishment on killing scavenger animals that feed on carcasses and filth. Many shlokas unambiguously testify these views.

Hindu scriptures affirm that people undertaking any intellectual mental work should consume only vegetarian diet and avoid pungent stale food, for refined thinking and subtler experience of heightened spiritual consciousness. If one's aim is to feed the animal inside oneself or gain extraordinary physical strength and vigor of a warrior then animal food is perhaps appropriate. However, if the resolve is to feed the divine human in oneself, favorable to the development of an extraordinary rational mind with spiritual disposition and a balanced body then one must choose to be a vegetarian that would finally lead to Moksha (liberation). Hindu texts constantly remind that a human is a miniature copy of Brahman (Purusha) i.e., God. Therefore, as individual microcosms we possess the positive divine energies as well as the negative demonic energies, either active, latent, manifest or inactive, dependent on a person's individual spiritual path. A person's external actions and aspirations shapes the inner cosmic order that either evolves or devolves every second. One can either strive and practice for the spiritual awakening of the divine energies to proceed further on the liberation path or kindle the egoistic nature of satisfying the lower needs by awakening the demonic energies that help one to achieve worldly goals but deluding and weaning, one away from the final spiritual path or destination.

अनुमन्ता विशसिता निहन्ता क्रयविक्रयी ।

संस्कर्ता चोपहर्ता च खादकश्चेति घातकाः ॥

– मनु स्मृति ५. ५१

Those who permit slaying of animals, those who bring animals for slaughter, those who slaughter, those who sell meat, those who purchase meat, those who prepare dishes out of it, those who serve that meat and those who eat are all murderers.

- Manu Smriti 5. 51

Karma (actions) guided by Buddhi (discriminating intelligence) plays a crucial role in determining the path one chooses in life that would much rest on the cosmic order one wishes to produce in one's consciousness. For the higher divine energies to work and manifest in one's body one needs to also make the mind suitable for their activity, preventing the demonic energies to prepare themselves and become stronger by feeding them their preferred food items that would possibly subdue and quieten the divine. It is not food alone that plays a vital role in our spiritual development but also overall discipline one must adhere to for total purification of mind and body. However, food is a decisive aspect in this purification process and until one becomes proficient in harnessing other forms of energy, the food ingested channels one's energies to the cosmic order. Deciding the most appropriate food is not easy

for our mind as it fed by our senses which is unreliable in matters regarding the human spirit. Therefore, in spiritual matters we have no option but to rely on an appropriate Guru (learned master) for guidance or find definite clues in scriptures. In Hindu scriptures (viz., Vedas, Upanishads, etc.) there are no commandments or no rigid "dos and don'ts". Hinduism advises us to use our own wisdom to decide on what one eats except for a firm prohibition of eating cow meat (beef). As Chanakya says, "You are, what you eat" or its natural corollary "You eat what you are", further reminding us that our food determines our temperament.

घृतं दुहानामदितिं जनायाग्ने मा हिग्मंसीः - यजुर्वेद १३. ४९

आरे गोहा नृहा वधो वो अस्तु - ऋग्वेद ७. ५६. १७

Do not kill cows and bulls who always deserve to be protected - Yajurveda 13. 49

Cow slaughter is a heinous crime equivalent to a human murder and those who commit this crime should be punished. - Rigveda 7. 53. 17

दीपो भक्षयते ध्वान्तं कज्जलं च प्रसूयते ।

यदन्नं भक्षयेन्नित्यं जायते तादृशी प्रजा ॥

- चाणक्य

Lamp eats darkness and produces (black) soot,
What food one eats daily, so will one produce.

- Chanakya.

Ayurveda, states that food is a panacea both to prevent or cure diseases. The Bhagavad-Gita also tells us that three Gunas (primary qualities) are present in nature (and in humans) at different levels and Gunas individual presence and predominance in numerous permutations and combinations determines human behavior and internal disposition. When Sattvic-Guna (pure) predominates, a person behaves in a soft pure manner with love and compassion. If Rajo-Guna (energizing) is predominant the same individual would act in an egoistic self-centered manner with no regard or concern for others. When Tamo-Guna (dull) is predominant the same individual is lethargic, harsh and cruel in manner without anything nice to show in human behavior.

Lord Sri Krishna links the Gunas to the three different types of food (Chapter 17:7-10), Sattvic (pure), Rajasic (energizing) and Tamasic (dull). Sattvic foods that produce calmness and serenity of mind include live foods like plants, vegetables and fruits, grains, pulses, nuts and milk products, rajasic foods that makes the mind restless include onions, garlic, peppers, spices, sour and bitter foods and tamasic foods that degenerates human nature include animal flesh, alcohol and decayed food. He says that Sattvic food is rasya (juicy), snigdha (oily), sthirah (stable or wholesome) and pleasing to the heart, promoting aayu (longevity), sattva (purity), bala (strength), aarogyam (health), sukham (happiness) and priti (satisfaction). Rajasic food is katu (bitter), amla (sour), lavana (salty), ati ushna (very hot), tikshana (pungent), ruksha (dry), vidahina (over cooked) causing discomfort, pain and diseases. Tamasic food is not yata yamam (fresh), gata rasam (tepid), puti (putrid), ucchistam (leftover) and amedhyam (impure) and these foods promotes tamasic nature. We can conclude that flesh or non-vegetarian food is either rajasic or tamasic. To have Sattvic-Guna is ideal if one's goal in life is to alter oneself from an instinctive

lower nature (prone to fear, confusion, jealousy, resentment, anger etc.) to a higher plane and become one with the inner self. As human beings it might not be always possible to totally suppress the rajas and tamas guna present, but one can always strengthen our sattvic nature through devotion, self-discipline and eating food which promotes sattvic qualities. Some people will argue that cooking meat (neither rotten nor burnt) in a sattvic manner without use too much salt or spices is possible, however, if one aims to attain inner purity and self-realization, then why take risks?

ब्रीहिमुत्तं यवमत्तमथो माषमथो तिलम् ।
एष वा भागो निहितो रन्ध्रेयाय दन्तौ मा हिंसिष्टं पितरं मातरं च ॥

- अथर्ववेद ६. १४०. २

You eat rice, barley, gram and sesame. All these cereals are specifically meant for you. Do not kill all those who are capable of being your fathers and mothers.

- Atharvaveda 6. 140. 2

Several non-vegetarian meat eaters can come up with an argument stating that even plants have life and therefore we should not eat vegetables if "non-violence and compassion toward animals" is one main reason against eating meat. Our ancient sages conclude that the roots, vegetables and fruit do not possess the four senses responsible for feeling pain, unlike a bird or an animal, whose killing for food involves unnecessarily too much violence, pain and agony as animals are also sentient beings like humans and experience a variety of emotions and feelings of joy, sorrow, pain, pleasure, hunger, fear, boredom, frustration or contentment and are conscious about the world around. The Bhagavad-Gita guides us to live in this world focusing our mind on God, offer our actions to God, with a detached sense, without any desire for the fruit of our actions. The Gita further counsels us that before we begin eating our food, offer it to God whatever be our food and eat it without any attachment, preference or desire.

स्वाहास्वधामृतभुजो देवाः सत्यार्जवप्रियाः ।

क्रव्यादान् राक्षसान् विद्धि जिहानृतपरायणान् ॥ २५ ॥

- श्रीमहाभारत, आनुशासनपर्वणि, ११५

People who eat food offered to gods or manes as if it is nectar, are truthful and love all lives are devas (godly) and people who are crooked, preach falsehood and eat animal flesh are rakshashas (demons). 25.

- Mahabaratha, Anushashan Parva, 115

Harmful Effects of Eating Meat and Eggs

WHO says that non-vegetarian food can cause 159 diverse types of disease. Common ones are heart diseases, kidney and gall bladder issues, arterial wounds, eczema, constipation, pains, arthritis, hysteria, paralysis, tuberculosis, etc. whereas vegetarian food is practically harmless, beneficial and capable of curing diseases! US medical doctors, Dr. A. Watchman and Dr. D. S. Bernstine say that their special study shows that non-vegetarian food gradually weakens and deteriorates bones. The vegetarians have stronger bones than non-vegetarians. Non-vegetarian's urine excretes a higher level of alkaline salts causing deficiency in the blood that human blood fulfills from the bones causing imbalance and reducing the resistance power to fight diseases. Dr. Khar T Loder Braston says, "Non-vegetarian food does not give strength instead weakens by producing nitrogen, which functions like poison for the nerves". Japanese scientist, Professor Venz experiments conclude

य आमं मांसमदन्ति पौरुषेयं च ये ऋविः ।
गर्भान्बादन्ति केशवास्तानितो नाशयामसि ॥
- अथर्ववेद ८. ६. २३

We ought to destroy all those who eat cooked as well as uncooked meat and meat involving the destruction of males / females fetus and eggs.
- Atharvaveda 8. 6. 23

that non-vegetarian apart from having the risk of cancer and other nervous disorders, is anxious, restless, angry, hasty, have a wild nature with higher sexual desire and criminal mentality. The author of "Diet and Food", Dr. Hugh affirming the above results further says, that vegetarian food is truly strengthening.

chronic hunger and over 20 million die due to malnutrition annually. Livestock animals fed with food grains yield from the food crops instead of humans in dire need, due world food crisis, further worsens the speed of climate change calamity the world suffers today. The food now sent to commercial livestock animals as a direct feed should be ideally given to the world's hungry population. Ironically, 80% of starving children live in the same countries that feeds its livestock instead of hungry people. **Isn't this not infinitely depressing?** According to American scientist Dr. Borg Storm the quantity of food fed to animals to get meat is enough to subside hunger of 50 % of world population.

Now let us consider eggs, that really have only little nutritional value and may have poisonous harmful elements (special growth hormones, pesticides, DDT, Evidin, etc.). Egg producing hens eat phlegm, sputum, nasal and other secretions, germs, worms, and many other filthy things and for people to believe that eating eggs can increase human mental capacity and intellectual quality is very surprising. Dr. Brown (Nobel prize winner) and Dr. Goldstein's study proves that eggs contain high amount (220 mg) of cholesterol increasing the threat of a heart attack. Eggs have phosphoric acid and nitrogen, that increases body acidity, which is a precursor to many other diseases. It sometimes harbors bacteria's like salmonella, shigella and staphylococci that cause intestinal diseases and tuberculosis germs as per Dr. Robert Grass. German Professor Dr. Egtur Burg, claims that egg is responsible for generating 51.83% of phlegm, in humans that imbalances body nutrition. According to Professor Akoda of England, both bile juice and pancreatic juice are unable to digest egg white.

Environmentally Unsustainable

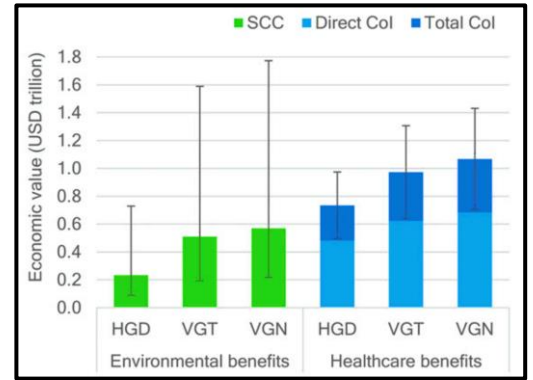
Truly we cannot deny the health and ethical benefits of being a vegetarian, however a plant-based diet is also healthy for the environment. Modern research says that a vegetarian diet is capable in reducing our personal environmental footprint. According to The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization the world uses about 30% land (not covered by ice) in producing livestock. Converting forest land into cattle pastureland, for animal feed grazing results in biodiversity and productive capacity losses in our ecosystems. The animal agriculture industry worldwide, is accountable for over 18% greenhouse gas emissions emitting large amounts of carbon-dioxide and methane. Short-range monetary gain is ignoring long-term irreplaceable harm to world's ecosystem. A recent impact study on vegetable, meat substitutes on environment show that meat alternatives create 10 times lower greenhouse gas emissions and saves valuable resources (viz., food, water, energy, etc.), since animals need not be fed, hydrated or cleaned up after killing, amidst apprehensions of climate change.

Reducing meat production not only supports the effort to conserve earth and significantly decrease adverse effects on the environment and global warming, but also promotes a more sustainable ethical way of life, enhancing people's lives around the globe. Animal agriculture powerfully impacts the poor people throughout the world. According to the WHO, about 1 billion persons suffer from

We require on an average 2 kilograms of grains and other plant protein animal feeds to produce 700 grams of animal meat. Similar is the fossil fuel needed to produce protein. 1 calorie of beef protein requires 78 calories of fuel, 1 calorie of pork requires 35 calories of fuel, 1 calorie of poultry requires 22 calories of fuel. However, only 1 calorie of fuel is necessary to get 1 calorie of soybean. Likewise, we need 3-15 times extra water to produce animal protein than plant protein. Surely, conservation of scarce water and energy is probable just by only eating plant foods and becoming vegetarian.

Research proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, show that it could cost USA anywhere between \$197 billion and \$289 billion per year, if people living in the country continue to eat animal-based diet. The global economy too could lose up to \$1.6 trillion by 2050. USA alone stands to save about \$250 billion, since it has a high per capita healthcare costs (\$180 billion) by simply switching to a healthy vegetarian eating, apart from saving an estimated 320,000 lives annually due to reduced cases of obesity and other chronic diseases.

The graph below shows the Health and environmental benefits of dietary change based on global guidelines on healthy eating (HGD), vegetarian (VGT) and vegan (VGN) diets. The value of environmental benefits derived from estimates of the social cost of carbon (SCC); and the value of healthcare benefits is based on estimates of the costs of illness (CoI).



MOST SIGNIFICANT LEARNINGS! Conventional logic, commonsense and supplementary research data all provide enough reasons for Governments to incentivize the agriculture industry and implement rational programs supporting a truly beneficial vegetarian economy that not only improves overall human health and wellness, reduce hunger of millions of poor, but also reduce pain, suffering and death inflicted on innocent lives. **SHOULDN'T NEW BHARAT TAKE A LEAD HERE TOO?**

"Despite popular knowledge of meat-eating's adverse effects, the non-vegetarian diet became increasingly widespread among Hindus after two major invasions by foreign powers, first the Muslim and later the British. With them came the desire to be 'civilized', to eat, as did the Sahib. Those actually trained in Vedic knowledge, however, never adopted a meat-oriented diet and the pious Hindu still observes vegetarian principles as a matter of religious duty".

Steven Rosen in his world-famous popular book, 'Food for the Spirit, Vegetarianism and the World Religions'.

य इच्छेत्पुरुषोऽत्यन्तमात्मानं निरुपद्रवम् ।
स वर्जयेत् मांसानि प्राणिनामिह सर्वशः ॥ ४८ ॥
- श्रीमहाभारत, अनुशासनपर्वणि, ११५

Any one who want to keep themselves totally free from any body disorders may just stop eating animal flesh. (48)
- Mahabaratha, Anushashan Parva, 115