

EATING - A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

“By their fruits you shall know them” Matthew 7:20

The hectic pace of our existence creates levels of stress that sometimes seem unbearable; that is, until we come to understand that a significant shift needs to take place in our existence, and are led more and more clearly to a new direction that leads us towards living a life based on the spirit, not on the material.

As we move in the direction of the spirit, we discover in ourselves an urgent need for peace and quiet, and realize that it is a spiritual practice that will bring inner peace. However, the time is not there. We are so busy with commitments and engagements that we have to struggle to find time for the practice and in so doing we increase the stress that we are trying to overcome. Caught in a vicious circle, we give up, waiting for the “right time” to commit, and time goes by until—for some—it is too late.

There are many interpretations of the term spiritual. For some it is equivalent to religion; for our purpose, we will interpret it as the process of self-discovery—realizing who we really are, the immortal spirit,

A journey starts with our present condition—the immortal spirit embodied in a physical frame in order to experience the physical plane. The human body, containing the divine spark, is the temple of the spirit and as such should be an object of our respect and reverence. As custodians of this temple, it is our duty to care for our body and to maintain it in optimal condition. This responsibility becomes a gateway to open the possibility of engaging in a spiritual practice, one that exists within the limitations and constraints of our hectic modern life. This cultivation of compassion for the human body, the temple of the spirit, then extends to all living things.

But here, we begin with our own body; not with self-centeredness or egoism, but with respect and reverence, we quietly and considerately learn to love and care for our material, physical body, and then gently expand our reverential attention to the mind and spirit as well.

Unfortunately, an impasse is often encountered on this road to self-discovery. It can be difficult, if not impossible, to remain on the path. Lack of discipline, distractions, doubt, lack of support, other responsibilities, etc., etc., can lead us far astray in spite of our repeated intentions. Why is this so?

Rudolf Steiner, a clairvoyant, visionary, and originator of many diverse disciplines of human endeavor in spiritual science, the arts, education, and agriculture, said:

Nutrition as it is today does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. A bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. **FOOD PLANTS NO LONGER CONTAIN THE FORCES PEOPLE NEED FOR THIS.**
(emphasis added.)

He said this in 1924. Imagine what he might say now, after 75 more years of intensive agribusiness.

It may seem simplistic to attribute to food the lack of will power to act and fulfill our resolutions, but if we look around we will see that other of his words have proven true. He foretold that infirmities like cancer and leukemia would rise if we continued on the road to improper nutrition through the presence of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and aggressive methods of agriculture.

If we accept the premise that food is an important element and we educate ourselves on this issue, we will naturally gravitate towards food grown Biodynamically—that is, food grown according to the guidelines offered by Rudolf Steiner.

The Biodynamic form of agriculture is based not only on great reverence and respect for the land, recognizing it as part of a living organism, but it incorporates elements to bring in cosmic forces that provide the bridge between thinking, willing and acting. Besides this, Biodynamics is a healing protocol for the soil and consequently for plants, animals, and human beings who live of that soil.

There is a startling difference between Biodynamic food and that which is offered in commercial stores, which is totally denatured, and packaged and processed to the point of replacing any trace of life with toxic, synthetic ingredients. That most people eat this so-called “food” can only serve to illustrate the magnificence of the human body, that it is capable of withstanding such mistreatment, but which unfortunately is losing the battle as seen by the increasing statistics of terminal disease.

In 1924, Rudolf Steiner gave eight lectures, now in a book entitled *Agriculture*, giving guidelines for how to grow the food that can be the bridge between thought, will, and action. Not only does this kind of agriculture preclude any unnatural methods such as chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and monocropping, but it goes beyond, to establish each farm as a self-contained organism in which etheric forces and forces of nature work in harmony with the farmer, whose reverent and respectful interactions with these forces act to heal the earth. One very specific component of Biodynamic agriculture, called “preparations”, are like homeopathic remedies for the farm. Dr. Steiner specified how to make the preparations that are in use today on Biodynamic farms.

Thus, Biodynamics can become the source of inspiration for our everyday spiritual practice. Eating is part and parcel of our existence. It is an aspect of our being that we can neglect but we cannot avoid. Therefore, conscious eating can become the tool for our spiritual practice. The degree of involvement and /or completeness will unfold as we appreciate its importance and effects both at a physical and spiritual level.

Conscious eating as a spiritual practice involves choosing food carefully, as well as preparing it and partaking of it mindfully. As Maha Chohan said in *Electrons*, from the Ascended Master Teaching Foundation.

“If a woman could see the sparks of light going forth from her fingertips when she is cooking,” writes one of the Masters, “and the substance of light that goes into the food she handles, she would be amazed to see how much of herself she charges into the meals that she prepares for her family and friends. It is one of the most important and least understood activities of life that the radiation and feeling that go into the preparation of food affect everyone who partakes of it, and this activity should be unhurried, peaceful and happy. It would be better that an individual did not eat at all, than to eat food that has been prepared under a feeling of anger, resentment, depression or any outward pressure, because the substance of the lifestream performing the service flows into that food and is eaten, and actually becomes part of the energy of the receiver. That is why the advanced spiritual teachers of the East never eat food prepared by anyone other than their own chelas (students.) Conversely, if the one preparing the food is the only one in the household who is spiritually advanced and an active charge of happiness, purity and peace pours forth into the food from him, this pours forth into the other members and blesses them. I might say that there are more ways than one of allowing the Spirit of God to enter the flesh of man.”

It follows that the third step in the process of eating as a spiritual practice involves the attitude with which we eat our food. Showing gratitude by blessing the food, thanking the divinity for providing it, and eating mindfully, we show love, reverence, and compassion, understanding that a form of life is being sacrificed for our benefit.

Thus, through our daily eating we have the opportunity for our spiritual practice and for creating a psychic environment of healing, love and compassion for all sentient beings.

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