

The Healthy and Wise Choice

Introduction

If you are a person concerned with the subtle, spiritual, mental, as well as the physical results of your eating habits then please read on. You are lucky because you have come across a marvelous jewel, written to uplift your soul as well as your body. This book stems from the original culinary guide, *Bhojana-sadhana*, which itself is derived from the ancient Vedas. This knowledge can only be imparted by a truly bona fide Indian Brahmana, and the author of this book is such a Brahmana, bringing to you uncut this ancient dietary philosophy. His Grace Mahant Sri Krsna Balaram Swami has been trained *since birth* for the upliftment of mankind. And vegetarianism has been part of his Eastern spiritual philosophy since time immemorial. This is the real article as taught for millions of years, literally, and reading this book will give you a look into the world where sages and kings perfectly ruled the earth during the now forgotten Golden Age. So now you too can live to your fullest possible potential and create your own golden age by reading this book, cooking to become Healthy, Happy and Wise. The Healthy and Wise Choice presents some spiritual and material reasons for many of life's problems, and Krsna Balaram Swami explains these problems and their solutions from the viewpoint of ancient Indian philosophy. This book is not just a health book, but a philosophical and spiritual approach to vegetarianism.

One must have an experienced guide to help one through life. The author, Krsna Balaram Swami, provides this experienced guidance. This philosophy is very detailed and exact, and, with the right teacher, you will be impressed with the changes in your life. The Author presents Indian philosophy like no one else can.

The Indian religion (Hinduism) is the oldest living religion on earth. Within it, you will find the best of all old world philosophies, especially the philosophy of "*ahimsa*", or non-violence to others. Where else in the world but India will you find five hundred million religious vegetarians? The author grew up in that culture under the strictest and most learned of teachers (*Brahmanas*). The very ancient Vedas, written in *Sanskrit*, are the basis for this philosophy. The *Sanskrit* language is very difficult to master. Vedic literature is voluminous, and it is nearly impossible to assimilate even a small portion of it. Fortunately, because of his rigorous training, the author can present the cream of the Vedas for us, which he has done so nicely here. The world is in need of this kind of guidance, and this philosophical vegetarian cookbook is a good way to present it.

We must step back in time to the fathers of religion and philosophy to bring back the moral and ethic background that is the basis of all civilization. Krsna Balaram Swami is our link with that ancient and most wise philosophy. Modern man has the tendency to divert away from his moral heritage, and glide into the abyss of lust, anger, and envy. Our new technical way of life sometimes makes us forget the real goal of life. I don't mean to say that all technology is bad, but there must be a balance. Let's take the best of both the ancient and modern worlds and live the right way. This is the only way to become really happy.

You will find many unfamiliar terms while reading this book. These are *Sanskrit* words and it is not necessary to pronounce them all. Just reading the English translation is all that is needed, although a *Sanskrit* pronunciation guide is provided. The author begins the book with why humans eat meat, and then familiarizes us with Vedic vegetarianism in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, he explains to us the consequences of eating meat. Then, in Chapter Four, he presents us with the benefits of vegetarianism, including historical points. Then in Chapter Five he presents us with more detailed instructions on how to cook and sanctify our eating.

The Editors

Chapter 1

Why Humans Around the World Eat Meat

In most parts of the world, people have been eating meat since infancy, and are not told about the consequences of eating meat. Priests, heads of state, parents, friends, teachers, health programmers, the media, the desire to continue eating meat and the taste of meat itself have made people addicted to eating meat. Meat tastes good; therefore people do not bother to consider the ghastly acts of killing innocent animals that bring meat to the table. Thus, the result is that more and more people ignorantly have adopted the lifestyle of meat-eating. But in God's law, ignorance is no excuse. Therefore, it is wise to study and find the best foods to eat and remain free from the consequences and be healthy, happy and wise.

Normally, those who are attached to eating meat think that vegetarian food has no taste, is not varied, has no protein or vitality, and that it is just boiled in water. Their mind-set is that people cannot survive if they don't eat meat. How is it, then, that the gorilla, elephant, horse and bull are so big and strong? They are all vegetarian creatures, yet each is very powerful. The idea that meat gives energy by supplying the body with large amounts of needed protein is propaganda.

St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) wrote in his "Free Choice of the Will," which was later translated and published in "Fathers of the Church's Services," saying that "Although the first men were undisciplined and brutish, they were vegetarians nonetheless." Largely due to Augustine's propaganda, our attitude and nature has been changed without thinking about the consequences of the present actions, which remove the value of animals from the minds of men.

Until Augustine, practically everyone followed vegetarianism. Origen (A.D. 185? -254?), who was considered the founder of Christian philosophy, was also a vegetarian. Human beings are given a certain amount of free will to choose the right thing for the self; but when this power to choose is misused, it brings bad *Karma* (or reaction) to the person. Therefore, Origen considered that the fall of an individual is due to misuse of his or her free will. He believed in transmigration of the soul's rising and falling in the evolutionary scale. According to him, the individual soul, falling short of the ultimate goal, is reincarnated into this world again and again. Until Augustine came along, this idea of reincarnation prevailed, which kept people from eating meat.

Therefore, the priesthood, heads of state, parents, teachers, health programmers and the media should see the real health value for people and introduce vegetarianism for their long and healthy life. Even though meat has been included in the diet since one's birth, it should be given up, because it implicates the person into sin. Therefore, it is wise for every intelligent person to be vegetarian to be happy and peaceful.

Everyone needs proper guidance to take the right path to avoid doing the wrong things. The timeless *Sanskrit* texts known as the Vedas, which are the first written religious texts, provide this guidance. According to Vedic *Sanskrit* scholars, these books were either spoken or written by the Supreme Lord Himself. The Vedas tell us that the Supreme Lord, who lives in His Kingdom, created this world and filled it with every kind of living entity so that each could experience the consequences of their past deeds. The merciful Lord, knowing the problems of living entities, manifested these Vedas to give information about how to live incessantly happy in this problematic material world, and after death reach the Kingdom of God.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Vedas (written in *Sanskrit*), originated long before Christianity. Another name for the *Sanskrit* language is or the language of God or demigods, and it has existed since the time of creation. Even if we take the opinion of the College Dictionary, the *Sanskrit* language has been in use since about 1200 B.C., and all Vedic scriptures are written or spoken in this language. In these scriptures, and also in the other holy books of the world, it is stated that everything that we see is created by the Supreme Lord. In this variegated creation the Lord divided humans into two categories--divine and demoniac. This is confirmed by Lord Krsna in the Bhagavad-Gita (16.6), "There are two kinds of beings in this world--the divine and the demoniac." He further says that demoniac people do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. They have neither cleanliness nor righteous conduct.

Divine people always abide by the laws of God, whereas the demoniac people act impulsively, ignoring the laws of God. These two classes of men--divine and demoniac--have existed throughout history. Meat-eating has also existed a long time. In the beginning all humans were vegetarians but eventually some adopted meat-eating. Upon their need they would hunt and eat their prey. But now slaughterhouses have taken the place of the hunt and supply meat in packages so the people do not realize that meat comes from ghastly killing. Because people are kept in such ignorance, the meat-eating population has greatly increased.

The Vedas also state that sacrificed animals could be eaten, but only under sacrifice restrictions. When a sacrificial animal was brought to the dais for sacrifice, it was told in its ear, "If you are not liberated, you come back and kill me in my next life." Such sacrifices were performed on the night of new moon, which comes once a month on the lunar calendar. In this sacrifice, a pure priest would chant perfected *Mantras* (spiritual hymns) so the killed animal would become liberated. Unless such rules were followed, meat eating was not allowed by the Vedas. These restrictions had to be followed by those who desired to eat meat in the Vedic civilization.

Now, in this present age of disturbance, Vedic priests do not engage in any type of ghastly activities, such as chanting *Mantras* for animal sacrifices, because they know that such *Mantras* have lost their potency. That is why the Vedic scriptures have put a ban on every animal sacrifice for this age. As it is said in the Vedic scriptures:

"The horse sacrifice, the cow sacrifice, the taking to renouncient life, the offering of oblations to the fore-

fathers and begetting a son by contacting the husband's brother are the five things forbidden in this present age of Kaliyuga."

For these reasons, and many others, people around the world have eaten meat for many centuries. However, to improve one's health, happiness and inner peace, one should consider refraining from eating meat, and begin the journey to a vegetarian way of life.

Chapter 2

Vedic Vegetarianism

Happiness through right consciousness

The Vedas describe how to have a clean body and consciousness, and how to act purely to have permanent peace, which is the root of happiness. Such lasting peace can be had by choosing foods from the vegetable kingdom as the Lord commands, instead of from the moving entities. This is the real solution to world peace. The Vedas and most scriptures of the world command us to have respect for others, thus the Golden Rule.

In today's modern world, people hold large scholarly gatherings to propose ways to obtain world peace. Even though they spend fortunes, peace still remains beyond their grasp. Peace cannot be created by men, as some imaginative and idealistic people think. Peace lies only in living in accordance with the instructions of the Supreme Lord. Unless we follow the laws in the ancient scriptures, we can only dream about having peace. Those with a little common sense will reach the root cause of their problems, and carefully follow the God-written scriptures step by step and quickly obtain lasting peace.

The basic system of peace is explained in the Taittiriya Upanisad in the following way:

"By consuming clean and pure foods, one develops clean consciousness, which increases the finer brain tissues of memory that actually relieve one from all problems of life."

Karma and Reincarnation

Psalm 104 of the Bible shows us God's close identification with beasts, sea creatures and birds. He blesses them, as well as humans by saying, "Be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:22)." Although statements by God exist regarding equal treatment for all moving entities, many Western philosophers, including Aristotle, believed that an animal's soul is not immortal. He conjectured that there are two types of souls, mortal and immortal. Nowhere in the Bible can we find such a statement.

Any creature that has the six signs of life--birth, growth, producing by-products, experiencing happiness and distress, dwindling and death--has a soul. The Vedas say, "Do not kill any category of living entity." Yet Augustine, a recognized Western philosopher, argued, "Since animals have no soul, they are meant for our use, dead or alive. It only remains for us to apply the commandment, 'Thou shall not kill' to man alone, oneself and others", (The City of God). Such statements became accepted within Christian Doctrine. Killing any creature means forcefully removing its lawful right to live.

The Vedas say that the soul enters the body at the time of conception. Thomas Aquinas, a philosopher, argued that the soul is created along with the body, and then becomes mortal or immortal. Aquinas' theory was accepted, and became the official doctrine of the Catholic Church. Again, where is the reasoning here? We know that God breathed life into man, but this does not imply that the soul did not pre-exist. The Vedas tell us that the Lord stores up the souls in a deep sleep state until He is ready to manifest them. Aquinas believed that each "human soul" is created one at a time, lives his life, and at death is saved or damned eternally. For Aquinas there was no possibility for the reincarnation of the soul. By denying the process of reincarnation and its eternity, such philosophers as Aquinas and Augustine made it difficult for people to understand the Supreme Justice of God. Unless there is a consequence experienced from good and evil actions, how can there be any justice in this world? Transmigration of the soul into good or bad status of life, or into higher or lower births, depend on one's good or evil acts in one's prior life.

If there is no transmigration of the soul in this creation, then where is the account for being born into good fortune or into misfortune? We see so many people who are born rich, beautiful, healthy and pious and others who are born poor, deformed, ignorant and impious. How can such situations be possible if the soul lives for a finite time or just

one life? This has to be the result of one's previous actions.

The truth of the eternity of the soul is found in the timeless Vedic literatures of India that prove the *Law of Karma*. Lord Krsna told His disciple Arjuna, "There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor will there ever be a time when we do not exist." (The Song of God 2.12). The soul actually passes through different bodies, according to its *Karma*, as air passes through a foul or fragrant place carrying its smell. Similarly, the soul, when it performs evil acts brings low birth or experiences misfortune. When it acts according to the desire of the Lord, it experiences lasting happiness and has birth in heavenly planets. This is practical, and fits in with the day-to-day experiences of every living being.

However, because Western culture does not accept the transmigration of the soul, they limit the power of God and His mercy. Western scholars say that at death, you either go to heaven or hell, or cease to exist forever. On the contrary, the Vedas describe the Lord as all merciful, and He loves His created beings. But those who do not follow His desires are punished by Him, as a disobedient son is punished by the father. The father does not hate his son; therefore, his punishment is to correct the child. But if the child is able to behave himself from the beginning and receive his father's blessings, then why should the child misbehave and get punished? Therefore, following the Vedic system of purification results in unlimited happiness in this life.

Vegetarian Categories

Actually, the strict vegetarian foods that are explained in the scriptures are the foods that keep our consciousness clean and increase the brain tissues. Problems in life begin when our consciousness is soiled. Lord Krsna also speaks in The Song of God regarding foods that are in the mode of goodness, passion and ignorance. Whatever quality of nature one is in, that is the quality of food he appreciates. But it is important that people change their diet to the most superior quality of food in order to be happy.

The Bhagavad Gita (Song of God) was spoken five thousand years ago by the Lord Himself in India where He said:

"Foods which increase the duration of life, purify one's existence, give strength, health, happiness, satisfaction, and are tasty, enduring and pleasing to the heart are very dear to persons in the mode of goodness."

(The Song of God 17.8)

"Foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, steamy hot, very pungent, dry or very spicy, cause distress, lamentation, and disease. They are dear to those who are in the mode of passion."

(The Song of God 17-9)

"Food cooked three hours before being eaten, which is tasteless, stale, putrid, or untouchable, as well as leftovers from others is food eaten by people in the mode of ignorance."

(The Song of God 17-10)

"Goodness attaches one to happiness, passion to the fruits of action, and ignorance, by covering one's knowledge, attaches one to madness."

(The Song of God 14.9)

The root of happiness is peace, as we have previously discussed, which can only be obtained by living in goodness, and eating the pure foods. But if one consumes foods of passion or ignorance, then one only dreams about having peace. As it is generally said, "You are what you eat." Therefore, for those who desire peace, the Lord recommends in the Bhagavat Gita to at least become vegetarian so a glimpse of peace can be experienced.

Status of Meat-eaters

One may ask, if the vegetarians are classified in goodness, passion and ignorance then what is the classification of those who are non-vegetarians in this world? According to the Vedas, they are outside classification. Human beings are designed by God to eat the same quality of foods as He accepts. In the Bible it is said, "Man is made in the image of God." It signifies that whatever food is accepted by God is the food to be eaten by man. The category of food the Lord accepts to eat is stated in the ancient scriptures of India, where the Lord Says:

"One who offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water--I accept it."

(The Song of God 9-26)

Also in the Vedas it is explained that foods such as fruits, vegetables, grains and beans, milk products, nuts, salt and sugar, if mixed in proper proportion, are accepted by the Lord, and they increase longevity, health and

happiness. These foods are in the quality of goodness. The Lord does not accept foods in passion or ignorance, let alone non-vegetarian. It is a fact that vegetarians are seen to be less agitated, less frustrated and less diseased than carnivores. But it is rare for non-vegetarians to be happy, either in life or after death. As the cream of the ancient Indian scriptures says:

"Those who are against the Supreme Personality of God or are very proud, or those who are in ignorance of the intricacies of Vedic religious principles think themselves as very advanced, and kill animals without any hesitation to eat them. However, they do not know that the same animals will eat them on their way to hell as soon as they die."

(Srimad Bhagavatam 11.5.14)

Therefore, according to the Vedic standard, these people are considered below any natural category of law and order in the material nature. Thus, they are dealt a severe penalty. One must be very careful not to fall into this category.

The Reaction of Eating Meat

Non-vegetarian food is defined by the greatly realized souls of India. Such great souls could directly converse with God. The analysis goes the following way:

(Nirnaya Dipika)

"Meat is called *Mamsah* in the ancient *Sanskrit* language of India. Breaking this word down we have '*mam*' meaning me and '*sah*' meaning with him. So I am eating him with me. This means anyone who eats meat will be eaten by the killed creature after his death. This is the exact definition of the word 'meat' in the *Sanskrit* language."

If such is the case, that a meat-eater will be consumed by the animal he eats, then every thoughtful person needs to consider becoming a vegetarian.

Vegetarians are not involved in violence because most of their edibles are obtained from plants. When a non-vegetarian eats meat, an animal had to experience great pain and suffering to be used for food. Killing an animal means removing a conscious being's right to live in that body. The Lord, who gave birth to the killed animal, had decided the particular soul to live in that body for a set amount of time and die a natural death. The very first law of the Bible indicates that people should be vegetarians. "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat (Genesis 1.29)." Every major religion of the world mandates that we must not cause any sorrow to any living creatures.

When an animal is killed untimely for obtaining meat, it creates disaster to the body, mind, intelligence and soul of the person eating this meat. The soul in each body is permanent and changes its physical body according to its *Karma*. For example, cars, jeeps and trucks are different in size and shape, yet each is operated by a human. Similarly, each living entity, which may seem externally different, has one and the same type of soul within. When we take away the rights of a soul, we commit a crime in the eyes of the Almighty Lord.

Are Vegetarians Involved in Killing?

Each person, as an intelligent human being, has questions in his mind. The law of human nature is that no one wants to be found guilty of having faults. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; if you find fault in me I will find them in you. So naturally, non-vegetarians will find some fault in vegetarians. If the meat-eater is held accountable for killing animals, then surely the vegetarian is held accountable for killing plants. Vegetables, such as spinach and potatoes, have life too. Whether someone steals one dollar or millions of dollars, each is called a thief, and is punishable. Similarly, the killer of a small or big living entity involves one in consequence and punishment. If this is the case, can anyone, vegetarian or non-vegetarian, claim to be better than the other?

It is a fact that plants have the six symptoms of life, which are birth, growth, experiencing pain and pleasure, producing by-products, dwindling and death; therefore, they also have souls. If this is the case, then vegetarians must also experience consequences like meat-eaters. No one in this creation, either a small or big sinner, is free from punishment for his unwanted actions. The court of the Supreme Lord does not discriminate, for He sees everyone in His creation with an equal vision. As the Lord says in the Bhagavat Gita:

"Being equally disposed towards everyone, I neither envy nor admire anyone. But those who render devotional service unto Me are attached to Me, and I to them." (The Song of God_9.29)

To maintain one's physical existence in this world, one has to kill and consume other living entities. Unless one eats other living entities, it is practically impossible to maintain life. This is the law of nature. As the ancient Vedic literature states:

"Those who do not have hands are food for those who have hands; those who have no legs are food for the four-legged. The weak are the subsistence of the strong, in this way one living entity is the food for another."
(Srimad Bhagavatam 1.13.47)

Even though it is the law, that one living entity subsists on another living entity, there is also a law of good sense for human beings to obey. Such scriptural laws of discrimination are impossible for the animals to follow. A tiger may attack, kill and eat a weaker animal or a human being, yet human beings have to act in certain ethical ways for their peaceful existence. Exploitation of the weaker living entity by the stronger is natural for existence. It cannot be checked by any official means except by the practice of spiritual regulations stated in the Vedic scriptures. According to Vedic laws, it is not right for human beings to kill and eat the weaker animals, while teaching other people about peaceful coexistence. This action is hypocritical. If humans do not allow animals to exist peacefully, then how can they themselves expect peace in human society? For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore, it is necessary for humans to abide by the laws of God expounded in the ancient scriptures.

People ask, if vegetarians are also involved in killing, then why do we speak against eating meat? The answer is that when something is recommended by the authority, even though it involves killing, it becomes justified. The Supreme Lord is the Supreme Authority in all cases and situations. The Lord said, "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water--I accept it." This means the Lord is vegetarian and gives a license to humans to be vegetarian. If human beings follow this rule of the Lord, they remain free from the consequences of killing. Take the example of a soldier on the battlefield. In following the orders of his commander, he kills many people from the opposing side, and he is rewarded for it. However, if the same soldier comes home on vacation, has a disagreement with somebody and kills that person because he became angry, he gets punished for his act. Even though killing is involved in both cases, the two separate acts do not carry the same results. In the first case he followed the orders of his commander, and in the second case he followed his own whims; therefore, he is rewarded and punished respectively. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the chief director of creation. Every soul has come from Him; He is the owner of everyone and everything. If we follow what He says, we get rewarded with lasting happiness and liberation. Whimsical acts, such as breaking the laws of the Lord, bring punishment. Therefore, everyone should abide by the laws of God that are taught in the Vedic scriptures. Whatever category of food the Lord eats should be offered unto Him and eaten by humans. Any other food is considered to be contaminated and brings consequences.

Ethical Law in Killing

One may question, didn't God give man dominion over the animals (Genesis 1.26)? Yes, but later He also forbade their use for food (Genesis 1.29). Do not confuse the terms dominion and domination. Dominion means guardianship, not killing or exploiting. It is clearly an injustice to raise and breed animals solely for meat. Each year, billions of animals and birds are being killed for food. While most animals are killed in the slaughterhouses, many are killed for so-called sports, such as in games like cock fights. While killing the poor animals, people don't consider the animals' pain. Even though Lord Jesus said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," many have no feelings for the animals' suffering. In Vedic civilization also it is said, "In this world, those who see other's pain and pleasure as their own pain and pleasure are said to be wise." Even though animals and birds do not speak our language, they do scream with pain while they are being killed. Every creature that moves on this planet is a child of God; therefore, each civilized man must protect them. Having pleasure at the cost of others' lives is a crime in the Karmic law. "He who kills an ox is like he who kills a man." (Isaiah 66.3). No one can hide his actions from the wide eyes of the Lord. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Finding such ethical reasons, many great people of this world became attracted to vegetarianism. If there is any consequence suffered by the vegetarian, that consequence is considered to be the least one of all.

Ancient Vedic Philosophy

The Vedic scriptures of India date even before the time of Buddhism. Not only do these scriptures forbid eating meat, Vedic civilization also requires a life for a life. One cannot even harm an ant without being held

responsible for its harm or death. The scriptures say that if one cannot create a creature from nothing, one should not dare kill any living entity. In Vedic civilization, the word 'kill' applies to every creature of this world, not just to humans alone. Therefore, the foundation of nonviolence and vegetarianism is strongly stressed for human beings.

It is unreasonable to say that, because Jesus ate fish, we can kill and eat fish. One must remember that Jesus also created many fish. Therefore, unless we have the power to create, we cannot be involved in killing. One may argue that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," of the Bible is meant for man and not for animals. This argument became accepted because Augustine distinguished between the soul of man and the soul of animals. Killing applies to any living thing as the dictionary defines the word. It is not for us to misinterpret the obvious meaning. The Vedic standard is that, for every creature killed by a human that person must also forfeit his life, because in the eyes of God each of His creatures has an equal value. If one would simply observe an animal, either one's own pet or an animal in the zoo, he will see that it behaves almost like a human being. It eats, sleeps, mates, takes care of its offspring, plays, fights, thinks, feels, wills and responds to calls. Such universal equality is found in animals. However, because the animals' intelligence and emotions are not as developed as those of a human being, the meat-eater justifies killing animals for food. Should we kill retarded people or young children because they are not fully developed? Our Spiritual Master Srila Prabhupada once stated, "God is considered to be the Supreme Father of every living entity. Even though the father has many children, some may be intelligent and others may not be. But, if an intelligent son tells his father, 'My brother is not very intelligent; let me kill him,' will the father agree? Surely not. Similarly, if God is the Supreme Father, why should He sanction the killing of animals who are also His sons?" Actually, if we do not improve ourselves and become vegetarian, then cannibalism will be the next step. We even hear of stories of cannibalism in modern society.

It must be understood that every living creature is the son of the Supreme Lord, and He does not tolerate even an ant being killed. One has to pay for the unnecessary pain caused to others. Therefore, to be free from the consequences of one's actions, one must be very kind-hearted to every moving creature on earth. Lord Krsna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "One who is kindhearted, friendly and not envious of any living entity, who is unattached to family ties, who is free from the false ego and equipoised in happiness and distress, who is self-satisfied and constantly engaged in devotional service, whose senses are under control, and whose mind and intelligence are dedicated to Me--such a devotee is very dear to Me." (The Song of God 12.13,14)

In the same Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krsna declares that the soul is present in the form of consciousness in every living being. The vital force which is the same in quality in every living being is superior to the matter composed in the temporary gross body. This soul, or the owner of the gross body, transmigrates into another body after death, just as a person changes apartments when the lease expires. This process of transmigration is applied to every living being, life after life. As Lord Krsna says:

"Just as a person gives up old and worn-out garments for new ones, similarly, the soul, after giving up the old body, accepts a new body." (The Song of God 2.22)

This same imperishable soul sometimes, according to his deeds, changes his body into lower or higher species of life. It is the Lord who decides, according to one's present *Karma*, one's next body from the six categories of 8,400,000 bodies. Scientists have not yet discovered all of them. As one of the ancient Vedic scriptures, the Garuda Purana states, "There are 900,000 categories of bodies under water; 2,000,000 kinds of bodies in the plant world; 1,100,000 kinds of bodies in the insect and reptile world; 1,000,000 kinds of bodies in the bird kingdom; 3,000,000 kinds of bodies in the animal kingdom and there are 400,000 kinds of bodies in the human kingdom." We cannot choose our next body. Only the Lord chooses our next destiny according to our present activities. Unless somebody is connected to a qualified Spiritual Master, his soul restlessly continues to journey from one body to another through the above varieties of bodies until it is liberated. It all depends on the mental state of the living being while on his death bed. As the Lord says to His disciple Arjuna in the Bhagavat Gita:

"Whatever thoughts one has at the time of quitting the body, to that state one goes without fail. Whatever thoughts abound, they are remembered at the end." (The Song of God 8.6)

The mind is like a television screen which displays its complete recorded activities at the time of death. At the time of death, whatever state of mind one is in, that state carries one into a particular physical body in his next life. Our mind constantly records our thoughts and desires and thus leads us to a particular body. Therefore, the body we presently occupy is the accurate state of our mind at the time of our last death. The Lord also confirms this in the Bhagavat Gita thus:

"All living entities are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to being conditioned by material nature, they are

struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind." (The Song of God 15.7)

The immortal soul does not end when the body dies, as some say. It even carries its trained senses and mind with it to its next physical body. As the Lord says in the Bhagavat Gita:

"When the master of the body, the spirit soul, changes from one body to another, he carries all these senses and the mind with him, as the air carries the aroma from a flower." (The Song of God 15.8)

"Upon accepting another gross body, the living entity develops suitable ears, eyes, touch, tongue, and nose, which center around the mind for sense enjoyment." (The Song of God 15.9)

Because they are not able to discriminate, the lower species only ascend towards higher births after their death. However, due to their knowledge of matter and spirit and power to choose between good and bad, human beings risk falling into the lower species of life if they do not properly prepare spiritually. *The law of Karma is the definite arrangement by God for a human being which unfailingly fulfills the present mentality of a person.* If a person remains ignorant of his human goals, he descends into the animal kingdom. As Lord Krsna says in the Bhagavat Gita:

"Those situated in goodness go upwards to the heavenly planets; those in the mode of passion remain on the earthly planet; and those in the mode of ignorance go down to the hellish planets." (The Song of God 14.18)

If one says, "I don't care; even if I am born as an animal, bird or plant, I will enjoy everything that gives me pleasure in this life," this will also lead him to unhappiness in this present life, because the laws of material nature are such that everything must change in due course. Therefore, every intelligent person is advised to prepare himself or herself for the present as well as the future by accepting a Spiritual Master, and in this way avoid a negative situation.

Chapter 3

Consequences of Eating Meat

The quest for Peace

Why do people suffer from countless diseases today? Cancer, heart disease, and many other illness continue to plague us. Mental tension, stress, depression, anger, and questing after unattainable dreams continuously haunt us, even in today's modern world. Day and night, doctors and scientists are spending our hard-earned tax money doing research. Still, they fail to find the solutions to most of these problems. Politicians make rash promises to provide the citizens with happy lives, but searching for happiness themselves, they cannot keep their promises. Socialists and religious scholars continue to lecture, attempting to guide the people on the right path, yet they also have failed to give humans peace. People have lost their faith in practically everyone and everything, and are now content with those activities which provide instant gratification. Such short-term pleasure does not keep people happy for long because the law of nature is to change such status into discontent in due course. Therefore, everyone is, in some fashion, suffering from anxiety. Tormented like this, many people are seeking any means to get real and lasting happiness. Unless one finds the right source of help, one cannot find the proper solutions that lead to lasting happiness and inner peace.

Physical Differences

There are many physical differences between the meat-eating animals and vegetarians. Like all vegetarian animals, humans have flat teeth, so as to bite and chew fruits, vegetables, and grains. The teeth of meat-eating animals, however, are sharp and pointed, to rip and tear flesh. Also, carnivores have digestive acids which are much stronger than that of humans. The intestines of carnivorous animals are one-quarter the length of human intestines. Thus, the meat passes through carnivores' digestive tracts quickly, before putrefaction takes place.

Meat, being the corpse of a once-mobile creature, decays rapidly by nature. Because humans have a longer digestive tract than carnivorous animals, meat eaten by humans begins to decay even before it reaches the intestines. The decaying meat produces many toxins in the stomach, thus poisoning the blood. The bodily organs, mainly the kidneys and liver which strain the blood, become overworked; thus, there is a high chance for dangerous diseases.

According to Ayurveda, the herbal medical science of India, food eaten with meat makes the body work extra hard to digest it, and that makes the body look older than that of a vegetarian of the same age. Meat takes a lot of energy to digest because the digestive properties of the secretions in the human system are less potent than those of the meat-eating animals.

Diseases Caused by Meat

Meat, if eaten by a body designed for consuming vegetarian foods, results in harmful physical reactions. When they become old, most people who eat meat require medicine to aid in digestion. All allopathic (not herbal or natural) medicines have side effects. Some of these reactions result in reducing the body's natural energy, or in creating some kind of noticeable disease within the body. Therefore, eating meat, instead of giving strength and energy to the body, makes the person feel uneasy, sleepy, lazy, angry, agitated, and unhappy. Carnivorous animals can tolerate large amounts of fat and cholesterol derived from their food and have no adverse affect, whereas humans and other vegetarian animals have limited abilities to assimilate fat and cholesterol. If humans, who are naturally meant to eat vegetarian foods, eat the fatty foods unnatural for their systems over a long period of time, it results in hardening of the arteries. This creates a very dangerous situation because the blood flow to the heart is restricted; thus, heart attacks or strokes may occur. The vegetarian diet is usually free from such unwanted and frightening results, and thus it is the diet that can prevent most of the premature deaths from heart failure in the world. Meat-mixed diets produce many dangerous toxins due to the fact that meat takes longer to pass through the intestines and colon; thus, the colon is then damaged by these substances. The decayed meat, while being digested, produces substances which can cause cancers, which even modern medical science has difficulty treating and curing. Usually, meat-eaters have to consume different intoxicants, such as liquor, tea or tobacco, to help digest the meat, which also produce harmful chemical reactions in the body. However, the natural or vegetarian diet is proven by modern medical science to greatly reduce the risk of colon disease. In fact, it is found that vegetables are the cure for many digestive diseases. Also, vegetables do not require any intoxicants to assist in digestion.

According to the Ayurveda, or the herbal science of India, it is said that many diseases occur due to the animal's fear of getting killed. When an animal is taken to be slaughtered, it becomes fearful, and thus spontaneously develops many diseases which can be passed on to humans. In the practical field, we have also seen that, before an animal is taken to be killed, it makes many abnormal sounds and screams, and it jumps around. According to the Ayurvedic science, this invites incurable diseases in him. When a human eats this flesh, he faces two types of diseases: the diseases he already had from his body and mind; and the diseases obtained from the flesh of animals. In herbal medicine, it is also said that diseases that occur from fear are difficult to cure. That is why today's meat-eating population faces many incurable diseases.

Livestock and poultry farmers also feed their animals with many artificial chemicals and drugs to keep them healthy. Usually, animals to be slaughtered are force-fed, inhumanely treated, and kept in unclean conditions that also contribute to many unrecognizable and incurable diseases in them. Further more, while being transported, meat is also treated with different preservatives to prevent it from early decay. Such treatment may give the meat an attractive red color, but it also endangers human health.

Vegetarian foods are not always obtained from killing plants or trees; therefore, it is normally free from any kind of incurable disease. One may question whether the killing of plants might also produce diseases, but such diseases are curable. The plant's fear is practically non-existent. Also, the pesticides sprayed on the vegetables can be washed off with hot water, and almost all dangers to health are reduced if vegetables are properly cooked. However, modern science has determined that some chemical pesticides and fertilizers can penetrate certain plants. For this reason, organically grown vegetables are recommended.

Chapter 4

Benefits of Vegetarianism

Historical Points

We have already discussed how The Creator of all beings is a vegetarian. The Ancient Epic Mahabharat from India confirms that everyone on earth was vegetarian in the beginning, but later some of the people became attracted to meat-eating; for this reason Lord Buddha appeared to preach nonviolence. Lord Jesus also preached

against killing. Many great leaders of the past and present were vegetarian. Pythagoras said, "Oh, my fellow men, do not defile your bodies with sinful foods. We have corn, we have apples bending down the branches with their weight, and grapes swelling on the vines. There are sweet-flavored herbs, and vegetables which can be cooked and softened over the fire, nor are you denied milk or thyme-scented honey. The earth affords a lavish supply of riches, of innocent foods, and offers you banquets that involve no bloodshed or slaughter; only beasts satisfy their hunger with flesh, and not even all of those, because horses, cattle, and sheep live on grass." Plutarch wrote of Pythagoras that, not only was he a vegetarian, but he even paid the fisherman to release his catch back into the sea. Actually, in every true civilization of man, eating flesh is not recommended.

The Roman author Plutarch wrote in his book, On Eating Flesh, "Can you really ask what reason Pythagoras had for abstinence from flesh? I rather wonder both by what accident and in what state of mind the first man touched to his mouth the gore and brought his lips to the flesh of a dead creature, sat forth tables of dead, stale bodies, and ventured to call food and nourishment the parts that had a little before bellowed and cried, moved and lived." He further wrote, "It is certainly not lions or wolves that we eat out of self-defense; on the contrary, we ignore these and slaughter harmless, tame creatures without stings or teeth to harm us. For the sake of a little flesh we deprive them of sun, of light, of duration of life to which they are entitled by birth and being." He even further challenged, "If you declare that you are naturally designed for such a diet, then first kill for yourself, what you want to eat. Do it, however, only through your own resources, unaided by cleaver or cudgel or any kind of ax."

An Indian apostle of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi, who was also a vegetarian, wrote five books on vegetarianism. He said, "I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants." Because India was under the foreign rule of Islam and England for a long period of time, some citizens adopted meat-eating habits. The food of Mahatma Gandhi included grains, greens, lemons and honey. He wrote to his friends who had adopted meat-eating, "It is necessary to correct the error that vegetarianism has made us weak in mind, or passive or inert in action. I do not regard flesh-food as necessary at any stage."

The famous author George Bernard Shaw also wrote, when he was told that he looked very youthful whereas others of the same age did not, "I look my age. It is the other people who look older than they are. What can you expect from people who eat corpses?" There are many other examples throughout history of famous people who also expounded vegetarianism.

Religion and Philosophy

Grains and vegetables, with the help of milk, cheese and butter, afford the most plentiful, wholesome, nourishing and invigorating diet. Turning from such a perfect diet and adopting the butchers' meat will prove to be a disaster. Everyone, including man, animals, sea life and birds are the creatures of God. To pray to God for His mercy and justice, while continuing to eat slaughtered animals, is hypocrisy. Even if it were proven that meat is good for health, one should remain a vegetarian to receive the mercy of God. By living with an animal, one can find that they have feelings, love and a soul, and thus they deserve to live a life in freedom. They should not be killed, even if so-called philosophers and religious leaders have sanctioned them for use as food. We have to see who are actually the real philosophers and religious teachers. One must use his intelligence and make the right decision; should I eat poor, defenseless animals because my religion allows me to, or would God prefer that I be kind to the poor animals and be a vegetarian? Actually the strict vegetarian foods that are explained in the Vedic scriptures are the clean foods that keep our consciousness clean and increase the brain tissues. Problems of life begin when our consciousness is soiled. Lord Krsna also says in the Bhagavad Gita that it is best to eat food in the mode of goodness to be Healthy, Happy and Wise.

Chapter 5

Sanctified Food

The procedure for purifying the food

When one prepares vegetarian food, as a matter of gratitude, it should be offered to God with the chanting of prayers and *Mantras*. Everything that exists is a creation of God, and whatever He has sanctioned for human beings should be accepted only after being offered to Him. This makes it free from Karmic consequences. The followers of such principles are called "devotees." As Lord Krsna says in the Gita:

"The devotees are freed from all types of sin because they eat food first offered in sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for themselves, are eating grievous sins."

(The Song of God 3.13)

The Supreme Lord, who is addressed as Krsna in the ancient Vedic scriptures of India, has the capacity and the power to protect us from all Karmic reactions, provided we follow His system of sanctification. He is the Lord of all creation and He knows how we can become sanctified from sins. If we surrender to His rules, then the anxiety of suffering is removed at once. But if we remain ignorant and do not follow His rules of sanctification, then we are implicating ourselves with grave sin. As one of the ancient Vedic literatures of India, the Mantrarnava states:

"O fools! I tell you in truth that nothing is yours, because the grains are produced by the mercy of the Lord through the rainfall, and you are committing sin by avoiding your prescribed duty. If you do not offer your food in sacrifice to the Lord nor share with your friends by eating alone, you are called a thief."

Therefore, all vegetarian foods should be offered to the Lord with *Mantras* (respectful silent hymns) that are taught by a qualified Spiritual Master. Such *Mantras* invite God to come to purify the offered food so that the sinful residues are removed from it.

The Vedas say that the main purpose of human life is to revive our lost relationship with God. That is why every religion known to man has at least a process of thanking God for supplying their daily needs. The human form of life gives one a chance to return home to the kingdom of God by adopting His recommended procedures of purification. Therefore, everyone must engage in their prescribed duty of pleasing God by engaging in His devotional service. If one executes devotional service to the Supreme Lord, he or she becomes intimately united with the Lord and thus becomes very happy. The Lord also says in the Gita "Only by devotional service can one understand Me as I am in truth, the Supreme Lord. Thereafter knowing Me in truth, he enters into My Supreme Kingdom." Such is the result of following the devotional path of God through a qualified Spiritual Master; then entrance into the kingdom of God is guaranteed.

This raises a question, How can we love someone we have not seen? Fortunately, the Vedic literatures describe the unique features of the Supreme Lord in great detail so we can serve him without any reservation. The Vedic concept of God is not vague, as some may speculate; it is very specific and detailed. In the ancient scriptures of India, the features of the Lord have been described endlessly and that is why His name is Krsna, "The all attractive Lord." When we understand the personal identity of God then it becomes very easy for us to meditate and offer Him our food. He, as the Supreme Person, returns His devotee's love, even though the offering is made here on Earth and He is far away in His Kingdom. Although He is in the spiritual world, He is all pervading, his hands and legs are so long that He can reach everywhere. Therefore, He accepts what we offer Him with love and makes it pure and free from all Karmic consequences.

The Potency of Sanctified Food

God, Krsna, is unlimited and has unlimited transcendental powers. He can, by His transcendental powers, convert matter into spirit. If He could not do so, then He would not be the omnipotent Lord. He, and no one else, has such powers. Just as an iron rod, placed in a fire for a long time, acts as fire, food offered with proper *Mantras* becomes fully spiritualized and is able to purify the sins of the eater. Such sanctified food is addressed as "*Prasadam*" (prah-shaH-dahm) in the *Sanskrit* language meaning "The liberating mercy of the Lord." Consuming such sanctified vegetarian food is the ultimate perfection of the vegetarian diet: by eating such foods, one becomes purified of all sins, removing all the troubles of life. The consumption of such pure food removes the influence of evil spirits, psychological troubles and health problems, and makes one pure and nearer to God. The Vedas say that the ultimate purpose of human life is to reawaken our lost relationship with the Lord, and eating *Prasadam* is very helpful in achieving this goal. Although He is God and He can eat anything from His creation, He says in the Bhagavat Gita, "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water--I accept it." He never says offer Me meat or wine; therefore, it must be understood that He does not want such impure things. God is a vegetarian, and wants all of us to be vegetarians, too. He further says, "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, as well as whatever charity you give and whatever austerities you perform, should be done as an offering unto Me." And He further says, "By doing so, you will be freed from all the reactions of good and bad deeds, and by this Yoga of renunciation, with your consciousness fixed on Me, you will be liberated and will come to Me."

There is a saying, "You are what you eat"; therefore, *Prasadam*, as it is the remnants of the Supreme Lord, will surely bring one to the platform of lasting happiness in life. Being children of God, it is our duty to follow what

He says.

Keeping purity while preparing the food

While preparing food, cleanliness in the kitchen is very important, because nothing impure can be offered to the Lord. While purchasing ingredients, one should be very selective. As we have discussed previously, there are three types of foods that are described by Lord Krsna in the five thousand year old Bhagavad Gita: foods in goodness, foods in passion and foods in ignorance. Therefore, selections should strictly consist of vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, sugar and dairy products that, if prepared in proper combination, will put the food in the category of goodness. The right spices and other natural ingredients that are necessary to prepare proper foods are usually available in Indian grocery stores. Onions, garlic, mushrooms, turnips and beet-roots should not be mixed in the food because, if these are used, the food will result in the category of passion. These vegetables bring sadness, frustration and wrath to the consumer. Asafetida is the replacement for impure spices and vegetables such as onions and garlic.

As we said previously, everything must be offered to the Lord. It is best if one does this under the guidance of a bonafide Guru, Spiritual Master. But if such a master is not available, one must do the best one can.

Always wash your hands before preparing the food, and never taste the food until it is prepared and offered to the Lord. While cooking the food, meditate that you are cooking for Lord Krsna. After cooking the food, place it on metal plates and bowls and offer them with *Mantras* or prayers. *Mantras* should be learnt from a bonafide Guru. If the *Mantras* are not known, then simply place the plate before the picture of Krsna and say, "O Lord Krsna please accept this food and forgive me for my mistakes." And then chant **HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE / HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**, three times with folded hands and closed eyes. This etiquette is simply to show your devotion and gratitude to the Lord. Eventually you may plan to learn the exact procedure of offering food from the ancient scriptures by contacting our centers listed in this book. God is complete in Himself and self-satisfied; He does not need anything from anyone. He only wants to see how much we love Him. Therefore, the Vedic scriptures state that He only wants our love and devotion, and this procedure of offering food is one of the main ways to show Him our gratitude and love.

According to the subtle law of *Karma*, food cooked by an unbeliever carries his sins to the consciousness of the eater, which lowers the eater's consciousness. Therefore, one should try to avoid food cooked by an unbeliever. Just as a painter expresses his state of mind when painting on the canvas, food cooked by an ignorant person will surely bring the cook's state of mind to anyone who eats the food. Therefore, it is advised to learn to cook for oneself or to eat foods that are cooked by a spiritually elevated person.

Karmic Consequences of Eating Vegetables

In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord told Arjuna that the soul has neither birth nor death, and when the body is destroyed, the soul remains untouched. If this is the case, then why should killing a plant or an animal, if a real death is not involved, be considered violence? In response to this, the Vedic evidence states, "The Supreme Destiny decides the duration of life for a soul in a particular body, and that soul experiences his past *Karma* in that body." Until that soul completes its duration of stay in that body, and is promoted to another body, he should not be disturbed. If there is any impediment to this rule of completing his term in his present body, it is regarded as violence. Therefore, one should not prematurely take away anybody's life for one's personal gratification because it disturbs the rightful duration of that creature's existence. Removing one's rightful living privilege in a body implicates one in Karmic reaction.

Even though, in comparison to animal slaughter, vegetarians are not always involved in much killing, they too, kill living things. However, accepting roots, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains involves less Karmic consequence, because plants have a less developed nervous system than animals. Vegetarians are still liable for punishment, even though there is a lot of difference between digging up a potato and killing a cow. Still, one must also suffer the Karmic consequences for killing plants. Therefore, vegetarians also need to purify their food by offering it to the Lord, so all the *Karma* from the food is removed and it becomes purified. When purified food is eaten, it cleanses the consciousness and increases duration of life, health and vigor; thus, one becomes Healthy, Happy and Wise.

Chapter 6

The Necessary Acts

In perfect cooking, the maintenance of hygiene is very important. Unless cleanliness is maintained, it is very difficult to have hygienic food that keeps the health and the consciousness perfect. Therefore, it is recommended that you avoid purchasing precooked food from the market. As far as possible, natural and fresh ingredients should be used in preparing the healthy diet.

Before entering the kitchen, you should be clean; that is, bathed or well-washed. The kitchen and utensils should also be clean. Always wash your hands before starting to prepare quality food. Before offering to the Lord, no portion of cooked or uncooked food should be tasted by you or anyone else. While cooking, if the mouth or nose is touched, you must wash your hands before you can proceed any further in cooking. As far as possible, intoxicants such as tea, coffee or alcohol, and any kind of meat products, fish or eggs, should be avoided. Such things create clouds of sin within the mind that lead the pure soul to degradation. Even among the vegetables, onions, garlic, mushrooms, and beet-roots should not be used. Following such rules for perfect cooking will bring one to the standard of real and perfect health. The Vedic medical science of herbs states, "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food." This phrase becomes reality by following such standardized cooking guidelines. It is not true that human civilization cannot maintain

their health without modern medicine. Only if the exact guidelines of Vedic cooking are followed properly will most of the unwanted diseases and suffering be avoided. If one can be healthy, happy and wise by following an easy procedure, then why be unhealthy and miserable? Diseases occur when one's food is unclean or unhygienic. Therefore, cleanliness is said to be next to Godliness.

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Generally, for success in any endeavor, humbly remembering and praying to the Spiritual Master is necessary. Before beginning the work, such subtle obeisances of remembering one's Spiritual Teacher purifies the surrounding atmosphere for successful results. Unless this procedure is followed, it is difficult to receive lasting success in any field. The Vedic standard states that following such procedures will transfer a subtle power to the cook so he or she can prepare tasty and perfect dishes with little work. Indeed, many have found that the expertise of a person, combined with the blessings of a Higher Authority, can bring perfection in any field of life. Because it has revealed this secret of success, the Vedic science is accepted as all-perfect.

To be free from the consequences of *Karma* while cooking, it is necessary to meditate like this: "I am cooking for the pleasure of Lord Krsna." Every ingredient should be clean and fresh. Try to avoid purchasing goods that are mixed with meat byproducts such as rennet or gelatine. Clean cooking will surely bring one to the

transcendental platform, and keep one healthy, happy and wise. The Vedic histories prove that the Supreme Lord comes down Himself and accepts such cooking to purify the food for the benefit of the consumer.

Most of the spices and ingredients are available in Indian grocery stores, or from other similar stores. It should be remembered that such spices help increase the appetite and digest the eaten food properly.

Unfamiliar Ingredients

As previously stated most of the unfamiliar special ingredients are easily available in Indian stores and the rest can be found in the normal food stores. The unfamiliar ingredients are:

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Besan-- A yellow flour made from Garbanzo beans (or Indian chick-peas) and is found in Indian stores. It is proteinful.

Garam Masālā-- A mixture of coriander, cumin, dry ginger, black pepper, bay leaves, cloves, cinnamon and

big black cardamon. It is readily available in Indian stores, already ground and is used in certain vegetables to bring out a palatable and strong flavor. It increases the digestive power.

Curry Powder-- A hot mixture of Turmeric, coriander, chilies, mustard, poppy seeds, fenugreek, cumin seeds and dry ginger, usually used to give a perfect and hot taste to the food. This mixture is usually found in Indian stores, but may also be available in grocery stores. It helps create digestive secretion.

Hing-- A juice from a tree, mixed with wheat flour; a substitute for the taste of garlic, onions and eggs. It is found in Indian stores and used in spicing of certain vegetables. Also called asafetida. It helps remove gas from the stomach.

Panir -- A light, rich, protein-full, home-made cheese which, if deep-fried, replaces the chewy texture of meat. It can be bought in Indian stores, or can easily be made at home by boiling milk and mixing in some lemon juice, and straining it through a cheese cloth.

Ghee -- Usually called clarified butter. When butter is boiled until it becomes separated from the milkfat, and is then strained through a cloth, it is called Ghee. It is used either in a "*chhaunk*" (pronounced as ch'haunk, a mixture of hot oil or ghee and sauteed spices.) or in steamy hot preparations. If prepared as above it is free of cholesterol. It is available in Indian stores, or can easily be made at home.

Dahl-- This is sometimes called split-pea. There are many types of split-pea available in Indian stores: Mung Dāhl, Urud Dāhl, Tur (Arhar) Dāhl and Chanā Dāhl. These Dāhls provide a lot of protein, and are cooked as soup and used as an aid to eating rice.

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It is recommended to buy fruits and vegetables in season; always choose the deepest colored vegetables, since they are the richest in antioxidant, disease-fighting vitamins. The most important thing in life is to learn how to be

healthy, happy and wise and be free from all problems. This book gives the criteria for how one can accomplish this. Even if one has little faith in the procedure to become happy through vegetarianism, if the rules are followed, good results are guaranteed. Just like when a doctor gives you a prescription, whether you believe it will work or not, the medicine cures the disease. So, follow the Vedic prescription, and in a short time become healthy, happy and wise.

Eating Education

Eat less salt. It is best to use sea salt. Each mouthful of food is to be chewed 50 times or until it becomes liquified in the mouth. Eat only when hungry, and stop eating when satisfied, but not stuffed. Walk a hundred yards after the meal and say a prayer, if possible one taught by a bonafide Gurū, before starting the meal. It helps to digest the food better, and rewards you with peace.

- 1) Eat only those foods that agree more with your system.
- 2) Eat a wide variety of foods daily so you can get the proper nutrition.
- 3) Always eat fresh foods, not dried, frozen or pre-packaged stale foods.
- 4) Always eat less, instead of over-eating.
- 5) Appreciate simple *sātvic* (food in goodness) and easily digestible foods.
- 6) Eat the bitter tasting foods first because they increase the stomach's ability to digest the meal.
- 7) Eat the sweet and/or sour foods at the end of your meal so the food will be digested properly.

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8) No fruits should be eaten with meals, except for properly ripened bananas or properly ripened mangos at the end of the meal, which is recommended for producing the digestive aids.

9) Never drink water right before or right after meals because it reduces the fire of digestion; during the meal is O.K.

10) Never eat raw beans, peas, alfalfa sprouts, or legume sprouts for they produce extra acids which may create ulcers.

11) Green and leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, and coriander leaves cooked or raw, which are rich in minerals, relax over-stressed blood vessels.

Benefits from the spices

Cumin seeds -- in either their seed or powder form they are beneficial for strengthening the bones and marrow.

Fenel seeds -- serve as an excellent remedy for food poisoning and/or indigestion. Fenel seeds also help promote digestive secretions.

Mustard seeds -- these seeds taste great but serve no medicinal purpose.

Celery seeds -- create heat in the stomach and relieve constipation.

Ginger -- can be used in any vegetable dish, helps bolster a hearty appetite.

Tumeric -- likewise used in any vegetable dish. Effective in curing hepatitis and jaundice. Tumeric has the additional property of cleansing the blood stream and arterial walls.

Coriander -- good for increasing mental acuity, helps initiate digestive juice secretion in the stomach.

Chile -- preferred in its fresh, green form. However, in every form it cleanses the blood and kills harmful bacteria in the stomach.

Cardamoms -- removes fatigue, increases mental sharpness, and assists greatly in the digestive processes.

Recipes

Remember that every preparation, when ready, must be offered to the Lord before it is tasted or smelled by anyone. The procedure for offering the prepared dishes are explained in Chapter Five. This rule of offering to the Lord shows Him our love for Him and helps us receive His benedictions.

The use of clarified butter, or ghee, is very healthy and frees us from the fear of cholesterol. The spices mentioned here are to help you digest the food properly and remove extra gas from your body. According to one's taste, salt and sugar can be reduced or increased; other basic principles of cooking and adding spices remain the same. The preparations mentioned here are thousands of years old, and are still regularly prepared and offered in India. Many of these are mentioned in the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārat, the two oldest epic poems in the world, as well as in many other ancient Vedic texts. As it is said:

*pacyantām vividhāḥ pākāḥ sūpāntāḥ pāyasādayaḥ
samyāvā pūpa-śaṣkulyaḥ sarva dohaś ca grhyatām*
(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.24.26)

"Prepare very nice foodstuffs of all descriptions from the right combination of grains and ghee that is collected from the creation of the Lord. After preparing the rice, Dāhl and Haluvā, Pakorā, Pūrī, Mālapūā and all kinds of milk preparations like sweet rice, sweet balls, Rasgullās and Laḍḍūs, it should be offered unto the Lord before taking personally."

There are thousands of varieties of preparations, each tasting different, each one better than the last. Each preparation can be learned and prepared with the help of a genuine devotee. Due to a lack of space, we are presenting only a few recipes here.

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Measurement abbreviations:

C = Cup

t = Teaspoon

T = Tablespoon

Rices

Dipikā rice

I C. rice

2 C. hot water
2 T. ghee, or any vegetable cooking oil
1 t. mustard seed
3 T. sugar (any kind)
1 T. curry powder
1 T. salt

First, wash the rice twice with clear water and let it soak for twenty minutes; then mix the rice and the hot water and cook it over a high flame with a cover on it, and stir once. When it comes to a boil, turn the flame to very low. After about 20 minutes, remove from flame and let it cool down a little.

Next, put a separate pot on the flame with the ghee or oil; when it becomes hot, add the mustard seed to it. When the seeds pop a little, add salt, curry powder and sugar to it. IMMEDIATELY REMOVE FROM THE FLAME, and add the cooked rice to it, mixing well. It is very tasty and healthy when served while it is hot.

Please remember that rice cannot be reheated for it becomes unhealthy. If rice is cold then other dishes such as soup or vegetables, should be heated and mixed with the rice and eaten. But, under no circumstances should rice be reheated by itself.

Vegetable rice

1 C. rice
2 C. hot water
1 t. cumin seeds
1 t. mustard seed
15 half crushed black pepper corns
1 t. Garam Masala
1 t. turmeric
1 T. salt
2 T. brown sugar
3 T. ghee or oil
1 full but chunked cauliflower
2 bay leaves

First, wash the rice well then remove all the water and let it sit for about 15 minutes. Heat the ghee or oil and add bay leaves, cumin, mustard and black pepper, and then add the rice to it, stirring it gently and slowly for 5 minutes. Then add the turmeric, Garam Masālā, salt and the chunked cauliflower, and stir for another 5 minutes. Then add the hot water to the mixture. When it starts to boil, reduce heat and add the sugar. It will be ready in 20-25 minutes.

Note- Not all vegetables can be used for making spicy vegetable rice. Green peas, chunked bell peppers, thinly cut cabbage, beans, blended spinach and blended tomatoes can also be used instead of cauliflower. If desired, several vegetables can also be combined together to make this rice. But the procedure of cooking is the same as explained above.

Upmā

2 T. ghee or oil
1 t. mustard seed and same amount of Urud dāhl

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1 T. salt

1 T. sugar
200 grams (1/2 lb.) chopped vegetables
2 pinches nutmeg powder
3 C. of hot water
1 C. semolina, cream of wheat or Sūjī

Heat the ghee and add the mustard seeds and the urud dāhl. When the dahl becomes a little brown, add the nutmeg, vegetables, salt, sugar and after five minutes add the water; let it boil. When vegetables are softened, add the farina, pouring slowly but constantly, while stirring the preparation constantly. When all the farina is mixed, remove from heat and leave it covered for 5 more minutes; then it is ready to be offered to the Lord.

Note-- There are many types of Upmās. This preparation can also be made without using any vegetables. But when semolina is roasted a little, with or without ghee, its texture improves.

Khichri

4 T. ghee or oil
2 dried red whole chilies
2 bay leaves
1 t. cumin seeds
1 T. grated ginger
1 C. split mung beans (Mung dāhl)
1 T. curry powder
1 T. turmeric
2 T. sugar
1 C. rice
6 C. water
1.5 T. salt
1 lb. chopped vegetables

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1 lb. chopped tomatoes (optional)

Heat the ghee in a big pan; add the red chilies and bay leaves. When they turn brown, add the cumin seeds. When cumin is brown, add the ginger and dahl, and stir for about 5 minutes. Then add the curry, turmeric, sugar and rice to the mixture, and stir for another 5 minutes. Add the water and vegetables to the heated ingredients and cover. After about 15 minutes, add the salt (and chopped tomatoes if desired) and cover. Cook over medium heat for 10 more minutes. Then it is ready for offering.

This preparation is very satisfying and healthy for the body. Because it is a light meal, it is usually used at breakfast time. Sometimes this preparation is recommended by doctors for their patients. It is a tasty and complete one-pot meal, and can be prepared in many variations (with and without vegetables). The texture can be adjusted by reducing the quantity of water.

Bread

Chapāties

1 C. whole wheat or Chapāti flour
tap water, enough to make soft dough
1 pinch salt

Take a cup of whole wheat flour (Indian chapāti flour is the best) and mix it with tap water and a pinch of salt, till it becomes a soft dough. Knead it well so the Chapāties will puff up. Take a small piece of dough about the size of a plum, and make it round by rolling between both palms. Smear it with some dry

flour, and roll it out into a round shape with a rolling

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pin; place it on a heated iron plate. Turn it over when it has developed a "skin" on the side touching the plate. When both sides have skins, put it directly over heat; when it is cooked a little it should puff up, but sometimes it won't. Smear some butter on the surface of the Chapātī and offer it to the Lord.

Usually, one should not make a habit of eating bread that is mixed with yeast, because, in herbal science, yeast is said to be not very healthy. But the chapātī is recommended as fit and healthy for everyone.

Pūrīs

The dough of Pūrīs is harder in texture than the Chapātī dough. The procedure of rolling the Pūrīs is same as Chapātīs, but, instead of smearing the ball with flour, it is smeared with ghee or oil. When they are rolled, they are deep fried in very hot ghee or oil while being rolled. Because they are deep fried, they are more difficult to digest. Thus, they are said to be less healthy than the Chapātīs. The Pūrīs are very easy to cook and can be kept, even without refrigeration, for a few days, whereas chapātīs can spoil in a day.

Pakorā

There are many kinds of Pakorās that can be made from vegetables, but certain kinds of vegetables, such as eggplants, spinach, pumpkin, potatoes and cauliflower, make the best combination and taste.

Eggplant Pakorā

1 big round purple eggplant (cut into thin slices)

150 grams (5 ozs.) chickpea flour

1.5 t. salt

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1.5 t. sugar

1 t. turmeric

1 t. ground chili powder or ground pepper

1 t. coriander powder

1 pinch Hing or asafetida

enough water to make the batter into a yogurt texture

Cut the eggplant into thin slices and smear them with a little turmeric and salt so the taste of eggplant remains. According to the herbal science, unless this formula is used eggplant may not be very beneficial to the health.

Make the batter from chickpea flour mixed with all the dry ingredients and water. The texture should be similar to nonfat yogurt. The secret is that it should be mixed well for about 5 minutes, so the taste of Besan will improve. Dip the eggplant pieces in the batter and deep-fry them in the hot ghee or oil. When they are almost brown, take them out and offer them hot to the Lord.

Cauliflower Pakorā

When cauliflower Pakorās are made, the chunks of cauliflower should be half boiled first, then Pakorās should be made. The rest of the procedure is the same as above.

Spinach and Cabbage Pakorās

Pakorās made from spinach and cabbage are different. The washed and cut spinach or cabbage should be added directly to the Besan flour. There is no need to make batter out of the Besan flour; mix the Besan and cut spinach or cabbage together with the spices and make into balls, then deep-fry.

Cofta

Dry potato cofta balls

2 lbs peeled potatoes
200 grams (7 ozs.) Besan flour
1.5 T. salt
1 t. chile powder
1 t. turmeric
2 T. sugar
1 T. coriander powder
1 pinch baking soda
4 tomatoes, blended (optional)
Ghee or oil for frying

Wash and grate the potatoes and then mix all the dry ingredients well. Make plum size (or size of preference) balls and deep-fry them in the hot ghee or oil. When they become a little brown, turn heat down to medium; when they become dark brown, take them out and offer to the Lord.

If desired, before making into balls, four blended tomatoes can be added into the grated potato mixture, then fried in the hot ghee. But in this mixture soda is not added.

Variations: Cofta balls could be made from cauliflower, cabbage, finely chopped spinach or grated sweet potatoes. But, in these types of cofta balls, baking soda is not added. The rest of the recipe is the same as above.

Wet cofta balls

2 lbs potatoes
200 grams (7 ozs.) besan flour
1 T. salt
1 T. sugar
1 T. fennel seeds

1 pinch baking soda
frying ghee or oil

Grate the potatoes and mix with dry ingredients, then make into desired-size balls and fry them as per previous cofta balls, leaving them in an uncovered container. Now make the sauce by following the directions below.

2 lbs red ripened tomatoes
200 grams (7 ozs.) milk (or water)
1 t. mustard seed
1 t. chile powder
1 T. salt

1 T. brown sugar
1 t. turmeric
1 pinch hing
3 T. ghee

Cut and blend the tomatoes together with milk or water. Place a pot on high heat and add ghee. When ghee is hot, add the mustard seed then add all the dry ingredients. Immediately add the tomato sauce mixed with milk (or water), and let it boil for about 25 minutes.

While tomato sauce is boiling, rinse the cofta balls with tap water and softly squeeze them and place them in a pot. Remove the boiling tomato sauce from the fire and pour it over the soaked cofta balls. This is called wet cofta balls, and it is ready to offer to the Lord. Wet cofta balls can also be made out of cauliflower or sweet potatoes.

Potato Bondā

2 lbs of potatoes
1 T. coriander powder
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1 T. salt
1 T. sugar
1 t. chile powder
1 lemon
200 grams (7 ozs.) Besan
1 pinch salt
enough water to make batter in the texture of yogurt
Ghee or oil for deep frying

First, boil the whole potatoes. When they are completely soft, cool and peel them. Mash them in a dry pot and, except the Besan flour, mix with all the dry ingredients. Make sure to mash the mixture in such a way that all the lumps are broken, but it should not become starchy or watery. Then add lemon juice and make plum-sized round balls out of the mashed potato mixture.

Mix water and a little salt into the Besan and make a batter the texture of yogurt. Dip the potato balls in the batter and deep fry them in the medium temperature ghee. After about 10 minutes, remove and put more balls in to fry; after 10 minutes, take the second batch out of the hot ghee. Then put the first batch back into the hot ghee and let them cook again till they are walnut-brown, then remove. Thus they are ready to be offered to the Lord. A similar procedure is used with all the *bonḍās*.

Bonḍās are usually eaten without any aid such as ketchup, but, if desired they can be eaten with a little tomato or apple chutney or a sauce.

Sweets

Haluvā

1/3 C. butter or ghee
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1 C. semolina, farina or cream of wheat
1/4 C. raisin
3 C. hot water
1.5 C. white sugar

Melt butter and add semolina; stir until it becomes a light almond color. Then add raisins; after one minute, add half of the hot water and stir. Immediately add sugar and the remaining water. Keep stirring

slowly, but constantly, until haluva pulls away from the sides of the pot. Remove from heat and continue stirring for a minute until some of the steam escapes. Then Haluvā is ready for offering.

Although it is not necessary to add any nuts or fruits in the Haluvā, if desired, it can be made with nuts and/or dry fruits, but they need to be fried longer than the raisins. If the juice of one lemon is added to the hot water, it becomes more flavorful.

Variations: When Haluvā is made from ordinary chapati flour, then the same amount of ghee and twice the water is used. The rest of recipe is the same.

If pineapple is to be mixed for a better flavor, then it should be blended and mixed with water, then brought to a boil. The total liquid mixture of pineapple and water should not exceed four times the semolina. The rest of the procedure is the same as the ordinary haluvā. The quantity of sugar can be adjusted as per a person's taste.

Medicinal use--Haluvā is very good, if properly made, to help cure the common cold. But after eating it, one should not drink any water for at least three hours. If Haluvā is eaten a few times, it will surely cure the cold without any medicine. It is also an instant energy-giving preparation.

Sweet rice

1 C. good quality long grain rice (or any rice)

2 T. ghee

10 black pepper corns

16 C. (1 Gallon or 4 litres) whole cow's milk

5 bay leaves

A few leaves saffron

50 (2 ozs.) grams golden raisins

2 C. white sugar

First wash the rice well and leave it in water to soak. Put a clean, dry metal pot on the flame, and add ghee. When ghee is hot, add the pepper corns. When they are half burnt, add the milk and stir side to side and up and down with the spoon, until milk comes to a full boil. Remember that milk does not stick to the bottom of the pot. When milk comes to a boil, strain the rice from the water, and add it to the boiling milk with the bay leaves. Do not stop stirring till it comes to a boil again. When rice comes to the surface of the milk, add the saffron and raisins. When saffron is fully dissolved, add the sugar and stir for a minute; let it boil for about 15-20 more minutes. Thus the sweet rice is ready but it is best served when it cools down to room temperature. Hot sweet rice may harm and cause diarrhea and ice cold sweet rice is harmful to celibacy. One should never drink milk on sweet rice for one may feel nauseous or experience heartburn or indigestion.

Papaya Ksir

1 large, hard, unripened green papaya

1 C. water

2 T. ghee

2 bay leaves

2 liters (1/2 gallon) whole cow's milk

250 grams (9 ozs.) white sugar

1 t. ground cardamom

First, peel the green papaya, remove the seeds and grate it into strings. Add one cup of water and boil for ten minutes. When it becomes cool, gently squeeze out the grated papaya strings from the water and place on a plate. Place ghee in a pan on high heat; when ghee is hot, add the bay leaves. Immediately add milk. Stir it constantly until milk comes to a boil. Add the grated papaya strings and let it boil about 25-30 minutes, then add sugar. After about ten more minutes, add cardamom to it and leave it covered for two hours, so it cools down to room temperature for offering.

This Kṣīr is supremely tasty and can be eaten on any day or at any time of the year, including fasting days, such as Ekādaśī. This preparation is very beneficial for those who are constipated, or have fungus or any other skin disease. Similarly, Kṣīr could also be made out of Italian squash (Laukī) using the same recipe.

Burfi

2 C. unsalted ricotta cheese

1 C. pure white sugar

1 t. cardamom seeds

Place a flat pan with ricotta cheese on medium heat and stir with a wooden spoon until it becomes similar in texture to chapāṭī dough. Add sugar and stir constantly so it does not stick to the bottom. After about 15 minutes, remove from the stove but continue stirring non-stop until it becomes half cold. Then smear a little ghee on a tray and spread the cooked Burfi about

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one inch thick; place the cardamom seeds on the surface, pressing them down. The next morning it will be ready to be cut into pieces and to be offered to the Lord. Refrigeration of Burfi is optional.

Coconut Burfi

1.5 C. ghee

1 C. all purpose white flour

1 C. Besan flour

1 C. dried coconut powder

2 C. whole powdered milk

1 C. water

3 C. white sugar

1 T. cardamom seeds

Mix the ghee and flours together in a deep wok; cook over a medium flame, stirring constantly until the flour turns a golden brown color. Add coconut powder and stir for about three more minutes; remove from heat. In a separate pot, mix the powdered milk and water. Add to cooked flour mixture, return to flame and cook for one more minute. Immediately add sugar and remove from the stove. Stir the mixture well until sugar is thoroughly dissolved. Spread on a ghee-smearred plate, or on the table, and roll with a rolling pin. Spread the cardamom seeds on and roll it again so the cardamom seeds stick to the burfi. After about five hours cut it into pieces and offer it to the Lord.

Gulābjāmun

1 lb. powdered milk

120 grams (4 ozs.) all purpose white flour

1 t. baking soda

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3 T. ghee
enough tap water to make soft dough
Ghee or oil for frying
2 liters (1/2 gallon) water
3 lbs sugar

Put milk powder, flour, soda and ghee together in one pot and mix it with both hands well till ghee is mixed properly to the powder and flour. Slowly add tap water while stirring constantly until it becomes a soft dough. Roll between palms, with a little pressure, into small plum-sized round balls.

Heat the (more) ghee in a flat frying pan over medium heat and stir; add as many balls as can float freely. Remember, when they become half-cooked they triple in size. If there are too many they will break up and make a mess. Stir or move them constantly so they are cooked all over. When they become a dark almond color, remove from the ghee and keep on a plate. Continue until all are cooked.

Heat about two liters of water and add sugar; let boil for about half an hour, then remove from heat. Stir once or twice and add the balls; leave covered for ten hours. They are ready to be offered to the Lord.

Vegetables

Cauliflower and Potatoes

1 large head cauliflower
200 grams (about 1/2 lb.) red tomatoes
1 lb. potatoes
4 T. ghee
1 t. cumin seeds
1 t. turmeric
1 t. black pepper powder
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1.5 T. salt
1 T. sugar
1 C. hot water

Peel potatoes and cut into chunks of equal size. Cut the head of cauliflower into pieces twice the size of the potatoes. Cauliflower cooks faster than the potatoes, so the cauliflower chunks have to be double the size of potato chunks. Wash all the vegetables and place in a container. Cut tomatoes into small chunks or blend them into liquid and keep it in a separate pot.

Place ghee in a pan over high heat; when ghee is hot, add cumin seeds. When cumin becomes a little dark, add all the dry ingredients; immediately add vegetables. If you wait to add the vegetables, the dry ingredients will burn and the spices will lose their flavor. Keep stirring every two minutes; after about ten minutes, add the hot water, then cover and let boil for about 10-15 more minutes. Add the cut or blended tomatoes; after about 10 more minutes it will be ready for offering.

Note--- If a drier vegetable is desired, then add less water and less salt and use a medium flame. If a more moist vegetable is desired, add a little more ghee, water and salt. The rest of the procedure is the same. If desired, tomatoes can be replaced with lemon juice. In all variations of this recipe, Garam Masālā should be used instead of pepper powder or along with the pepper. Remember to add Garam Masālā while adding the water to the vegetable, and not to the hot ghee from the beginning.

Potato string beans

1 lb. potatoes
1 lb. string beans
250 grams (1/2 lb.) tomatoes
3 T. ghee

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1 t. cumin seeds
1 t. mustard seeds
1 T. curry powder
1.5 T. salt
1 T. sugar
3 C. water

Cut potatoes to about the size of apricots, and string beans to the size of fingers and rinse them. Rinse the tomatoes and cut into desired-sized chunks. Heat ghee in pan when ghee becomes hot add seeds. When seeds become a little brown, add the powders and immediately add the vegetables. On the high flame stir the vegetable for about 5 minutes and then add the water and leave it covered for 20 minutes and then add the tomatoes. After 10 more minutes it will be ready for offering.

Cabbage and potatoes

1 large head cabbage
1 lb. potatoes
200 grams (1/2 lb.) tomatoes
3 T. ghee
1 t. cumin seeds
1 t. mustard seed
1 T. curry powder
1.5 T. salt
1 T. sugar
1 C. water

Cabbage is a very healthy vegetable in herbal science. Remember, cabbage takes longer to cook than the potatoes therefore potatoes should be cut into larger pieces than the cabbage; wash cabbage and potatoes. Wash the tomatoes separately and cut into small chunks or blend them.

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Heat the ghee in a pot and add the seeds. When seeds are a little brown, add the other dry ingredients; then add vegetables immediately, stirring once every 5 minutes. After 10 minutes add one cup of water. Then after about 20-25 minutes, add the tomatoes and let cook for about 10 more minutes; it will be ready for offering.

If moist vegetables are desired, then add more water and keep the flame high. If water is not added, then half way through cooking, turn the flame to medium. If desired, tomatoes can be eliminated and/or lemon juice can be added.

Cabbage and string beans

1 large head cabbage
1 lb. string beans
200 grams (1/2 lb.) tomatoes
3 T. ghee

1 T. curry powder
(If desired, curry powder can be replaced with
1 T. coriander powder and
1 t. pepper powder)
1.5 T. each salt and sugar
1 t. mustard seed
3 C. water
2 T. chick-pea flour

The cooking and cutting recipe is the same as the previous cabbage recipe. The difference is that, when the vegetable is fully cooked and about to be removed from heat, chick-pea flour mixed well in 1/4 cup of extra water is added into it and cook about 10 minutes more. Now it is ready to be offered to the Lord.

When coriander and pepper powder recipe is applied, these ingredients are added to the vegetable while adding the water the first time.

Squash and potato

3 lbs. any type of squash
1 lb. potatoes
200 grams (1/2 lb.) red tomatoes
3 T. ghee
2 whole dry red chilies
1 T. fenugreek
1.5 T. salt
1 t. turmeric
1 T. Garam Masala (if desired)
1.5 T. brown sugar
1/2 C. water

Cut the vegetables into equal size chunks and then wash them together. Put a pan with ghee on high heat; when ghee is hot, add the red chilies. When chilies turn a little brown, add the seeds. When seeds are a little brown add the salt, turmeric and vegetables. Stir every five minutes and add (if desired, Garam Masālā) sugar, and water, and cover for 15 minutes. Then add tomatoes; after 10 more minutes it can be offered to the Lord.

Tomatoes can be replaced by 2 tablespoons lemon juice or tamarind paste. The rest of the recipe is the same. The mixture of squash and potato is very healthy in the winter. Curd (Panir) or soybean tofu can be added while adding the tomatoes. Boiled and softened garbanzo beans or kidney beans also make this recipe very nutritious and tasty.

Broccoli and potato

4 heads broccoli
1 lb. potatoes
200 grams (1/2 lb.) tomatoes
4 T. ghee
1 t. cumin seed
1 T. curry powder
2 t. salt

1 T. sugar
1 C. water

Cut the broccoli in such a way that it has long and thin stems because stems carry calcium and iron. Thick stems can also be used if they are skinned. Cut the potatoes into chunks and then wash each of the vegetables separately. Cut the tomatoes into small chunks or blend them into a paste. Remember, all year round, broccoli is very healthy for the body, so it can be eaten more often than other vegetables.

Heat the ghee and add the seeds. When the seeds become brown, add the dry ingredients and immediately the potatoes and stir for about three minutes. Then add broccoli and stir. After five more minutes, add water and cover for 15 minutes over medium heat. Add tomatoes and cook for another 10 minutes. It is ready for offering.

If desired, while adding tomatoes, sour cream or cream cheese can be added to make the vegetable more flavorful and nutritious. Boiled and softened garbanzo beans can also be added at this time.

Mahā brinjal

6 large eggplants
1 bowl of water, enough to cover pieces of eggplant
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1 lb. red tomatoes
6 T. ghee
2 bay leaves
1 t. cumin seed
1 t. turmeric
1.5 T. salt
1.5 T. Garam Masālā
1 C. water
1.5 T. sugar
1 T. coriander powder or some chopped
coriander leaves

Cut the eggplants into 5 gram (plum-sized) chunks or slices, put in a bowl of water. Remember, as soon as you cut egg-plant it must be covered in water so the bitter taste of the egg-plant is removed. Wash and cut tomatoes and place them separately in a bowl.

Place a pot with ghee over high heat; when it is hot, add bay leaves and the seeds. When seeds are brown, add turmeric and salt and immediately add eggplant pieces. Stir a few minutes, then add the Garam Masālā, sugar and a cup of water. Leave covered for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add coriander leaves or powder and tomatoes and cover again for 5 more minutes, then stir again. After five more minutes, the dish is ready for offering.

If desired, a pound of cut and deep-fried potatoes can be added to this recipe while adding tomatoes but salt and Garam Masālā should be increased by half. The rest of the recipe can remain the same.

Enjoy these recipes, and you will learn how healthy and happy vegetarians can be--that knowledge will make you wise.