

# Think and eat Veg

Vegan vegetarian  
towards raw food

With the words of Sai Baba and other Great Ones

Elisabetta Passalacqua

The new, visited and extended edition of the first half of  
*“Essere vegetariani, Perché e come diventarlo”*, Ibiskos editor

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*Food has to be considered  
as medicine for  
the illness of hunger.*

Sai Baba

*Let food be thy medicine  
and medicine be thy food.*

Ippocrate

*The time will come  
when men  
will look upon  
the murder of animals  
as they now look upon  
the murder of men.*

Leonardo da Vinci

*As is the food,  
so is the mind  
as is the mind,  
so is the God.*

Sai Baba

For my sons,  
Francesco and Simone,  
vegetarians by birth,  
so that when they want,  
they may be inspired.

## ***Presentation***

Four years after the publication of the first edition of my book on nutrition, I have extended it and published it also in English. The title is no longer “Being vegetarian”, but “Think and Eat Veg”, as I am ever more convinced that the only viable way to survive ethically and in health is that of following a vegan diet based mainly on raw, biological food.

My firm belief derives from personal experience, research and experimentations I continue to do.

Even though I am fully aware of the unnaturalness of a human being eating any products deriving from animals, I retain that it is inevitable that many still use dairy products. Considering this I have kept an attentive eye on milk and its derivatives. I am certain that they are not suitable and healthy nourishment and that they currently represent a doom for animals and the planet we live on.

I talk less of eggs, that I find particularly invasive, both on a material as well as an energetic level. I believe a vegetarian person should not eat eggs.

Even if one does not want to listen to the pain of animals, nor think of the consequences that the regular use of animal products has, if we take an open look to our surroundings, it seems evident that we cannot continue to pretend nothing is wrong.

Based on this and striven by my own will to do good and look beyond the moment and some evident facts, I have extended my book in order to give a more complete view of the importance of being vegan.

To do this, observing the way we humans are structured, I started from the subtle bodies and advanced to the material body and to the consequences that an erroneous diet can provoke to both (subtle and material bodies), with a similar devastating resonance to our lives.

I have taken a more attentive look at the relationship between our immune system, our thoughts, our respiration and introspective practices such as yoga, given the important link between subtle and material bodies.

I do not desire to preach philosophically, since my words have mainly practical goals, but I found it essential to give attention to what our existence and the development of human species, to which we belong, represent.

Perhaps the main point of my book is to consider the importance of nutrition in all its aspects, from the spiritual (going beyond any one religion) to the physical, from the need to understand the main types of food and the consequences of eating one rather than another, to the horrors related to intensive animal breeding without respect towards animals, mother Earth and thus towards ourselves.

I have included some words in Sanskrit and some short *mantras*, merely for the powerful effect that such language has both on material and spiritual bodies. They are there for anyone who wishes to approach them, even if through a few simple expressions, like I do.

With all my heart, I wish you a happy reading!

## ***Premise***

Life is a game, a commitment, a challenge, to be lived with enthusiasm and dedication to God and to ourselves. To do this, we need physical and mental health. We all need to regain and maintain the ideal mental, physical and emotional state of well-being, in which each of us knows what we really want and what we are called to be and do, in every circumstance. My book is dedicated to this, so that all you respectful and attentive readers may receive maximum benefits from it, as I have received from some books that reached my heart with their better words, and that are reaching you, through my words.

It might be true that books do not give joy and true consciousness of the fact that in reality we are all God, but it is surely true that an excellent book, written through a heart that is devoted to the divine and to other humans, will be well accepted by who awaits for it and by who sees it with open eyes.

This is my wish and what the divine has donated to me, whichever way you might want to call him. There are no differences in names in the substance.

With love, Elisabetta

All names are one to a loving mother, there is no difference between my children for me, nor between you readers, whatever color be your skin or whatever your religion, your way of adoring me and protecting me from harm. This is it, I am One and One I remain, despite of the thousands of differentiations done by man that have lost the path that leads to me. Every time you protect the divine, you protect yourselves, because every time you find harmony within yourselves you find it with me.

This is everything, the importance of things in everyday life is confused, it is the same for me since the beginning, in an infinite solitude, until you return home to me, my children.

Return home! I wait for you and desire you, to embrace you with my heart like a mother, to cuddle you like a child. And this is since the beginning, my children, this is everything.

Could be signed by God, Sai Baba

## HOW TO EAT

### ***Essential norms***

*Well, pure, clean, balanced, with love, joy and gratitude.*

These are the basic rules of behavior that Krishna, the avatar, the divine incarnation from 5000 years ago, indicated to us in her *Song of the Lord*, the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The devoted Arjuna, in *Bhagavad Gita*, asks Krishna for practical advice on how to overcome the consequences of actions of past lives and liberate oneself from the continuous cycle of birth and death. The avatar responds “you are what you eat and your actions shape your nature. Therefore, in this last birth, in your current life, if you regulate your food and your actions, you can conquer asuric tendencies, that is, demoniacal tendencies within yourself and promote sattvic tendencies, those pure, with a pondered effort”. And she continues “food is the main creative force: moral conduct, good habits, spiritual effort, everything depends from the quality of food”.

Food should be pure to energize and magnify our abilities, clean for physical and mental hygiene, moderate for respect towards body and mind, prepared and served with love to fill it with vibrations of joy, offered to God, to gain the collaboration of the divine to purify it and optimize its use.

*Healthy food is* pure - sattvic  
clean and moderate,  
without excess,  
prepared and served with  
love and joy,  
offered to God.

Also Sai Baba, the purna avatar of our days, with full powers, tells us that food forms our body and determines the thoughts in our mind. Based on this, food is of fundamental importance for the evolution of the soul, the

clearness and promptness of the mind and the physical health. Consequently, the strength and brightness of a person's character are tightly connected to the type of diet he practices.

“The lotus flower is the beauty of a lake, beautiful houses are ornaments of villages and cities. Waves decorate the majestic ocean, the moon is the charm of the infinite sky. The true ornament of a human being is his character”, says Sai Baba.

### **Body, mind and sheaths**

Our body is a boat we use to cross the ocean of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death, and to reach liberation, *moksha*. Therefore, it is understandable how its efficient functionality is of utmost importance.

The body is the temple, and who resides in it is God, the inhabitant, the true Self connected with all, the One who was never born and will never perish. Hence man has the duty to look after the true sanctuary of divinity and maintain it in a healthy state. This is essential for reaching the four ideals that we must pursue: proper conduct, well being, realization of correct desires and freedom from pain.

But in order to achieve the four ideals, as the wise Latins taught us, we need a “*mens sana in corpore sano*”, a healthy mind in a healthy body. “As is the food, so is the mind, as is the mind, so are the thoughts, as are the thoughts, so is the behavior, as is the behavior, so is the health”, says Sai Baba.

The body and the mind are strongly interdependent. Therefore, whoever wants to soar and reach a state of permanent interior peace, *ananda*, bliss, or even only to begin the path that leads to spiritual pursuit and being a part of everything, has to consider the importance of the food they ingest.

Sai Baba says “as is the food, so is the thought, you will become what you eat. Do not eat meat, it is a sin to kill innocent animals”. “Help forever, hurt never”.

To obtain a state of tranquility and a healthy parting, of interior peace, in which nothing and no one can harm us, to become, at last, true divine humans, we must eat correctly and not get confused with our exterior appearance.

“In reality we are not our bodies”, says Sai Baba, but inhabitants within it, the soul, *l’atma*, part of the supreme *Paramatma*, God. As spirit we are forever connected and absorbed to the absolute divinity, but as souls we need to gain experience and evolve. Therefore we need a material structure that will allow us to move in the third dimension. This is made of five bodies or sheaths that are groups in three main sheaths or bodies.

*The five sheaths and three main bodies that host the soul*

	<i>The five sheaths</i>	<i>The three principal sheaths</i>
<i>Annamaya kosha</i>	Material foodstuff sheath,	gross or physical body.
<i>Pranamaya kosha</i>	Vital energy sheath,	first part of the subtle body,
<i>Manomaya kosha</i>	Sheath of the operative, ordinary mind,	second part of the subtle body,
<i>Vijnanamaya kosha</i>	Sheath of intellect, the superior mind given by intuition and wisdom	third part of the subtle body.
<i>Anandamaya kosha</i>	Sheath of bliss	causal body.

The physical body is the first and most external of the five sheaths that cover the *atmic* core, the soul. It is also the one that influences all the other four, through its state of health. Since the physical body depends from what we eat, this makes food of utmost importance for all the levels of our existence.

The second body is the subtle one that works from inside out in a similar way as the electric power that lights up the lamps but is invisible. It comprises of three different sheaths, made respectively of *prana*, the vital energy, of *manas*, the operative mind of thoughts, and of *vijnana* or *buddhi*, the intellect understood as intuition and wisdom.

The third body is the causal one that forms the primary cause, origin of life and of everything that happens. When the state of causal body is achieved, we don't need to reincarnate in the third dimension.

A healthy mind and body are a result of a healthy diet and of a correct lifestyle that are able to lead a person to the fulfillment of his life, to self-realization, *ananda*, passing from one level to the next, until the third and highest one, *Brahmananda*, the divine bliss that can be reached after surpassing the five sheaths.

All our behavior derives from the food we eat. Disagreements, conflicts, wars, lack of comprehension between people are all connected to our diet, "because different food leads to different behavior", says Sai Baba.

### ***Nature of food***

Everything in nature, including food, is characterized by three fundamental aspects called *gunas* that have different features and "in which God exists, although being above it all, seeing that in God there are no *gunas*", says Sai Baba.

The three *gunas* that represent the three aspects of human nature, with their respective qualities, each conduct to a different disposition.

#### *The three aspects of human nature, gunas*

<i>Sattvaguna</i>	leads to control of the cause of pain and suffering and thus to follow the real path of joy and happiness
<i>Rajoguna</i>	conducts to attachment, desires and craving to find happiness in objects
<i>Tamoguna</i>	drives to not grasping the truth, to taking for real what is actually false, to abiding in error and to tightening the knots of the bonds

*Some qualities of the three gunas*

<i>Sattvaguna</i>	has fraternity, trust, purity, wisdom, peace, faith in ourselves and in God, bliss and glory. Donates wellbeing and joy to body, mind and heart and helps maintain a sacred lifestyle.
<i>Rajoguna</i>	has passion, aggressiveness, litigiousness, obstinacy, greed, pride, presumption, hatred and malice. Leads to believing in what in reality does not exist and getting ill.
<i>Tamoguna</i>	has destitution, laziness, indolence, numbness and arrogance. Increases illnesses, prevents healing and darkens the vision of what is real.

Observing the different diets people conduct, we notice that there are some that eat mainly sattvic, pure food, others prefer rajasic, stimulating food, yet others choose tamasic, lifeless food. There are also different combinations of these three.

Furthermore, knowing what certain foods represent and entail, and understanding their characteristics, we can deduce a persons diet from just watching their behavior. This in consideration of the fact that each of us behaves and has decisional evolutive levels as a consequence of what we eat.

Therefore, human relationships are affected by our diets and two people are able to dialogue well, if they have chosen a similar, correct diet. Sai Baba says that there are very few good, healthy friendships between two carnivores, only due to good karma from past lives. Usually these relationships are based on common interests, rather than on mutual comprehension.

This is a largely widespread behavior, but normally people don't realize this, because they do not know other energy than the one that derives from a carnivorous diet and cannot notice the difference.

Moreover, a truly genuine friendship can be formed exclusively between people that only eat pure, sattvic food, because it is the only type of diet that can express and develop the most noble human characteristics, including altruistic and spiritual qualities.

Just like when two people meet and the first is carnivore and the second a vegetarian, the first one should aim towards the diet of the second one, in order to understand the major cosmic resonance. Even more so, whoever desires to have long, genuine friendships and a profound union with oneself and the divine, needs to prefer food that God likes, sattvic food.

Food is sattvic, not only if it is pure as choice, but also if it is eaten in moderate quantities and numbers of meals within a day. We should not fulfill ourselves to satiety with food, and we should also limit the number of meals within the day and eat in a clean and pure environment.

Those who practice soul searching should tend towards one basic meal per day. The most ancient and sacred texts, the Vedas, affirm that who eats three times a day is a *rogī*, an unhealthy one, who eats twice a day is a *bhogī*, a reveler, who eats only once a day is a *yogī*, the one whose thought is fixed on the divine. Sai Baba calls those who eat more than three times a day the "living dead".

Naturally this rule is a basic indication that each of us can decide to take into consideration in the measure we find opportune. It is not applicable to children that are growing, nor in other cases where health requires a different diet.

Sai Baba, the ancient texts and other Great Ones suggest to fast once a week, for the hygiene and the health of the body and the mind and to follow the spiritual path.

The above must be done with individual consideration, with due exceptions when health or growth do not permit the adhesion. The stomach in fact, just as a car motor, needs to rest in order to function fully well, given the laborious work it undergoes continuously.

To help our organism to purify and disintossicate itself during the fasting day, it would be useful to drink lots of pure water. During meals it would be better to abstain from drinking or drink as little as possible, depending on what we are eating, since water dilutes gastric fluid and

weakens digestion. It is opportune to drink water, as light as possible, in between meals and foremost in the morning, when it would also be useful to drink freshly-made juices, extracts or centrifuges of fruit and vegetables. It is suggested to abstain from drinking water ca. 15 minutes before eating and at least 30 minutes after eating.

### ***Food that shapes us***

To fully understand why we are what we eat, we need to remember that each part of food has its own specific function in the construction and maintenance of the complex human body.

As Sai Baba and the Veda traditions say, the gross part of food is discharged through feces, the intermediate subtle part constitutes muscles and bones, the subtle part transforms itself in blood and nerves and the essence of the subtle part determines the quality of the mind that manifests itself in the form of the word, *vak*.

Like everything in nature, also food is strictly connected with its origin and the divine from which it derives. The gross part of food, *anna*, is *Brahma*, God in the aspect of creator, the subtle part is *Vishnu*, God in the aspect of conservator and protector, the most subtle part and essence is *Shiva*, God in the form of destroyer and renovator. Food represents *Trimurti*, the divine Trinity. “Food is God”, says Sai Baba.

The gross part of the water we drink tones our body and is eliminated through urine, whereas the subtle part transforms itself in vital energy, *prana*.

#### *Food transforms into*

<i>Gross part</i>	Feces
<i>Intermediate subtle part</i>	Muscles and bones
<i>Subtle part</i>	Blood and nerves
<i>Essence</i>	Mind and word

*Water  
transforms into*

*Gross part  
Subtle part*

Urine  
Prana

This way water takes the form of life and food takes the form of mind and body. For this reason we cannot truly progress in our evolution and human spiritual discipline, *sadhana*, if we do not fully control the way we eat.

In reality, “food should be eaten solely to heal the illness of hunger, without thinking of its flavor, but only of its effectiveness that is lost when food is savored excessively, increasing thus the negative effects. Until today I don’t know the flavor of a dessert”, says Sai Baba and adds “you should control the sense of taste. It is natural to be hungry and to want to eat, however food serves to protect your body and not to indulge the senses. Therefore, tongue, sacrifice flavor and eat only for hunger!”

Our efforts to change interiorly are in vain, if we do not change our dietary habits in favor of a healthier diet. We must lead our hearts and our consciousness to a better condition, they must be purified.

### ***Autodiscipline and sacrifices***

Paying attention to one’s spiritual aspect is the most important quality for a complete human being and for whoever has a true interest in his true Self. A truly devoted person is ceaselessly concentrated on God and submits himself only to God. To reach this condition and to take the steps that precede it, every sensing organ must be truly disciplined. Most of all, it is of utmost importance to submit one’s tongue to the will of the divine.

The tongue is the only organ that has a double function, taste and speech. Both these activities are of utmost importance in reaching the realization of oneself.

“Mastering this organ consents an easy domination of all the other organs”, says Sai Baba and adds that an inconsiderate use of the tongue may cause painful wounds in the hearts of others, so that “a wound caused by a cutting blade may be healed, but not one caused by a cruel word”.

The true spiritual practice, *sadhana*, consists in the technique of merging the power of speech, *vak*, with the mind, the mind with the intellect and the intellect with *atma*, so that our personal triad can become one and that we can be a true human being.

As a seed first needs to be sown and then rained upon in order for it to sprout, similarly we need to make sure that the food we eat and the spiritual energy arrive together, aligned in the same direction, towards our divinity. Only this way we can count on the divine support. Our food and behavior should be perfectly aligned.

“The desire of hunger and sex are the biggest enemies of mankind”, warns Sai Baba. “Resist to procuring food for the tongue and its greed, do not be victims of lust or taste. Be moderate with food and maintain your senses under control”.

Food is of fundamental importance for the purification of the heart and the reaching of consciousness. Every second we should be prepared for the final moment and we should ceaselessly think of the divine.

Many people say they are happy and their wellbeing is assured and they do not need anything else. But this is utter foolishness.

In this case it is not us enjoying wellbeing, but it is wellbeing drawing benefit from us. Only God can bring us to the highest level of our evolution. If we eat sattvic food, our divine nature will find its expression. The sacred world derives from the pure world.

We should have and follow the rules and the disciplines, based on the limits that we impose on ourselves and that constitute abdications and sacrifices, *tapas*, for an individual. A life without self control is unmoral or, in other terms, without human value.

Self-discipline leads to true peace, stability, fairness and a constant mental equilibrium, that is a condition to be found, not only during meditation, but always, in a spontaneous and customary manner.

As support to meditation we need to practice *dharma*, correct behavior and observance of a moral code that, together with a diet of pure food, can help us progress in the four stages of spirituality.

### *Four stages of spirituality*

<i>Salokya</i>	Always thinking of the divine and living in a spiritual fashion.
<i>Samipya</i>	approaching God.
<i>Sarupya</i>	absorbing the chosen form of divinity.
<i>Sayuja</i>	become one with God, without trace of dualism.

This way we can reach *moksha*, freedom from the cycle of birth and death. But since the body and mind are contaminated by negativism, pure food alone is not sufficient for the spiritual progress of a man. The ancient texts, the Great Ones, the yogis and Sai Baba say that we should not talk of negative issues, nor see or listen to them, or be in contact with them. This means that we should not indulge in what is dark or malignant, but on the contrary, we should feed our five sensing organs of perception with food, music and performances that are healthy, pure and positive, and that help us be well and rise.

#### *Organs for sensing, Jnanendriya*

<i>Tongue</i>	should sing glory to the divine in all its manifestations
<i>Ears</i>	should find pleasure in listening to divine manifestations
<i>Eyes</i>	are the windows of the heart and as such should only rejoice on sattvic, pure and spiritual images, so that the heart overflows with love and compassion
<i>Nose</i>	should be satisfied with pleasant scents. “Bad odors can cause allergies”. “We must breath pure air in open and clean spaces”, says Sai Baba.
<i>Skin</i>	should not be in contact with people of bad habits, because this stimulates heavy thoughts while the company of righteous people, <i>satsang</i> , leads to detachment. “Being in contact with something our organism does not accept may cause allergies”, says Sai Baba.

We should perform only good deeds with our hands, in harmony with the nickname *temple* attributed to our body, respecting the divine and, for the same reason, we should avoid clothes that are not in harmony with the sacredness of our body.

Our clothes should be clean, essential and decorous, “they should be used to protect us from the heat and the cold but not for useless performance”, at the expense of the our physical, mental and spiritual health, says Sai Baba.

This does not mean that women cannot wear feminine clothes. Rather, if we think of an indian *sari*, if worn appropriately, it gives a woman dignity that inspires reverence, respect and charm.

Femininity, with all its qualities and expressions, is not born through clothes, but from the depth of the heart and the opening of the mind, and can be applied, as a visible expression, in choosing and using of clothes. It depends on what one wants and looks for.

Attention and rectitude in our behavioral bring us peace of mind and this saves us from many mental and physical illnesses, together with pure food.

This is the fundamental base to respect oneself and others and to reach fulfillment of oneself and liberation.

### ***Health, limits and progresses***

Spiritual researchers or whoever wants to reach a fullness that goes beyond the exterior aspect, need to inevitably eat pure food. Only by doing so, one can reach and maintain complete health of mind, body and emotions, and be fully engaged with this world and the other worlds.

Only when health is appropriately put in the first place, it is possible to fully enjoy it and utilize it to fulfill ones duties and reach the purposes of life.

As much as they may vary from one person to another, they bring us to the guidelines that are the same for everyone, the four *purushartas*, the objects of human pursuit.

*Four objects of human pursuit, purushartas*

<i>Dharma</i>	righteousness, moral values
<i>Artha</i>	prosperity achieved with legal means
<i>Kama</i>	legitimate desires
<i>Moksha</i>	liberation from birth and death.

The first three are to be reached within human life and the last one when we leave our bodies. The liberation is the ultimate goal for every human being, whether or not we are aware of it and whether we actively pursue it or are indifferent to it. Those who do not actively pursue it, sooner or later, depending on the stage of evolution, their material existence will become senseless and they will start facing sadness and disappointments, without understanding the true reason.

Physical and mental health need to be protected, so that we can reach an impulse that is superior to any other attraction that pushes us towards fields of soul searching, never experimented before. Such searching also pushes us towards a wider vision, until we are able to verify a goal that is higher than the usual ones for our existence. This will lead us to desiring interior and eternal joy, the one that nothing and no-one can take away from us, that brings us to bliss, *ananda*, and to the liberation of reincarnations in the third dimension.

All the living species on Earth, except for one, eat raw food in the form it is available in nature and normally have perfect health unless human beings intervene or due to natural unforeseen causes.

Only one species, humans, is subject to several problems, because human beings have learned to refuse food the way it exists in nature and as cosmos and its laws of survival and abundance have always offered it. We have preferred to transform and manipulate natural food to please our palates destroying the vital essence that it contains.

By doing this we have opened the door to a countless number of illnesses. The word illness indicates a state of ailment, that derives from the

derangement of our own character and balance that distresses both our mental and physical health. This happens when food is impure.

The fundamental center of health in a human body is the stomach, as its functioning affects the state of well-being of all the other physical organs: this because the stomach digests and supplies the necessary fuel for the human machine. Such importance doesn't depend only from the food we eat or how we eat it, but also from the way we respect and consider our higher self, our divine entity that resides in us as a digestive power that governs and presides over all the vital processes of our body. In order for the digestive fire to be respected, we need to eat pure food, as nature provides it, in moderate quantities and at regular intervals. Pure food, eaten in a pure manner, together with the conscious behavior with sleep and physical exercise strengthen the mind and the body, helping self-control.

We should not sleep more than necessary. "Wasted time is a wasted life", says Sai Baba. Children and youngsters should sleep 8 hours, adults should sleep 6 hours and growing older, 4 hours. Also the way one sleeps should be regular and hygienic, not all curled up, but laying on the back, in a clean and well-ventilated environment, with change of clean air. At night-time our body eliminates lots of toxins into the air and it needs to be cleaned up to favor the organic exchange of oxygen.

Physical exercise is of utmost importance. The ancient *rishi*, the great clairvoyant *yogi* of the remote past, used to take long walks in the woods, listening to mother nature and praising glory to the divine. Where and when possible, we should search for contact with nature that vivifies and be grateful for this gift. We must put our bodies and everything that has been given to us to good use, otherwise they wither away as useless and then need to be rehabilitated and retrained to function as they were meant to do.

"The damage caused by a sedentary and indoor life is incalculable", says Sai Baba, not only to our body, but also to our mind and character. He adds that the best ways to get exercise are walking at a rather fast pace, riding a bicycle and swimming. But any form of physical exercise is beneficial. Doing it while thinking of our higher self and being grateful for the scenery, a flower or another wonder, is a magic touch to optimize the results.

It is important not to exceed our limits, *miti*, in order not to waste our progress, *gati*. Little by little we should learn not to exalt for our

successes and not to get depressed for our defeats. It is helpful to offer the results of our completed actions to the divine, detaching ourselves from them as much as possible and continuing our path tranquilly, with our mind geared towards the most noble goals. Courage is essential, we must be certain of winning and persevere.

“Desire it and success will be yours, if you are preoccupied with the true purpose of life, you will live for as many years as necessary to fulfill that desire”, says Sai Baba, and adds “in the remote past, people lived for 110-120 years, because they conducted their lives thinking constantly of God”.

In order to own this profound desire and the divine benediction that follows, once again we need limits in our daily lives. Purity and moderation with food are a benefit for the digestive system and therefore for the entire body. Excessive and disorganized eating is detrimental.

Only because food is offered or available, does not mean that we must accept or eat it. The animals that live in nature do not. We have air around us, yet we do not breath more air than we need, says Sai Baba. The same goes for food. The type and quantity of food we eat indicates whether our self-control has increased or decreased. The quality of what we use to feed ourselves concerns first and foremost food, water and air that, if polluted, become extremely harmful and must therefore be avoided as much as possible. There are four types of pollution, that should be avoided or removed.

#### *Four types of pollution*

Of body	<i>can be removed with water</i>
Of mind	<i>can be removed with the truth</i>
Of reason	<i>can be removed with correct consciousness</i>
Of ego	<i>can be removed with desire of the divine</i>

To partially protect ourselves from pollution, it is useful to spend time in the open air and in the sun with the due precautions, bath in water, clay wraps and use holy ashes, the *vibhuti*, that means power of God. Let us

listen to our inner doctor, look for him, trust him and we might find the path to definite healing.

Good health is the logical consequence of a disciplined and regulated life, just as sickness is the logical consequence of disorganized eating habits, inactivity and weakness of soul.

Only the people with good health can forget about their physical body and dedicate themselves completely to more noble and satisfying activities. Let us occupy ourselves, if possible, with our personal duties, and our health will benefit from this. Let us not think of our bodies excessively, but open our hearts to joy and its beneficial light, let the Sun touch us, penetrate our houses and bless our clothes and our food, making them healthy and energizing.

Let us also consider that every object and living creature emits great quantities of tiny particles and vibrations. Camphor is a great example as it emits so many particles that a bar disappears in no time.

These emanations constitute a type of pollution, that of particles being heavier and that of vibrations being subtler. This conditions the environment in which we live as well as our physical and mental health.

### ***Purification of food and health***

Paying respect and homage to ourselves and our capacity to digest is useful for optimizing digestion and strengthening the organism. Before eating, it is beneficial to turn to the divine, in whatever form one prefers. Offering our food to God, asking him to participate at our table, with his participation so that the food be purified from what we cannot control, is an action that makes us responsible and helps us pay attention to the action of eating.

A particular form of prayer, very ancient and powerful, is the mantra of food that is in the *Bhagavad Gita*. It consists of two parts, the first is the act of offering to God creator, *Brahma*, the second is the answer of God to the offerer.

## Mantra Brahmarpanam

Brahmarpanam, Brahma Havir  
Brahmagnau Brahmana Hutam  
Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam  
Brahma Karma Samadhina

The act of offering, the offer, he who offers and the sacred fire of digestion are all *Brahman*. Only he who is completely absorbed in *Brahman* can reach it.

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva  
Praninam Dehamashitah  
Pranapana Sama Yuktah  
Pachami Annam Chatur Vidham  
Shanti Shanti Shanti

I am Vaishvanaro, the cosmic pervading energy that resides in the bodies of living creatures. I am the vital breath that enters and exits. I am the consumed food. I consume the different kinds of foods with the fire of digestion. He who trusts himself in me will find realization.

The following mantra is shorter.

Om Annam Brahma  
Raso Vishnu  
Bhokta Devo Maheshwara

The food, *annam*, is *Brahma*, the juice, *rasa*, is *Vishnu*, the consumed food is *Maheshwara*. *Brahma* is God in the form of creator, *Vishnu* in the form of conserver e *Maheshwara* is God in the form of destroyer and renovator.

Naturally it is not necessary to recite the mantras in Sanskrit. It is essential to offer the food wholeheartedly, whatever prayer one uses. What is needed is consciousness of the importance of what we are doing and all the gratitude we are capable of feeling. Before the offering, food is

only food, with its limits and faults, after the offering it should become *prasadam*, sacred food.

The power of mantras is in any case clearly perceivable. It seems to go beyond our intentions, shaping and purifying them. Sanskrit resonates highly and is the mother tongue of all the other languages, just like India is the homeland of spirituality of all the others. Mantras are instruments of power and realization; they are divine if aligned with light.

Another mantra that can be used to bless and purify food is mantra *Asatoma*.

### Mantra Asatoma

Asatoma Sad Gamaya  
Tamasoma Joytir Gamaya  
Mrtyorma Amrtam Gamaya  
Shanti Shanti Shanti

Bring me from illusion to truth, from shadow to light, from death to immortality, from the transient world of corruptibility to the one that is stable and permanent in the bliss. Peace, peace, peace.

Finally, before eating, as in every other occasion, one can recite *Gayatri* mantra.

### Mantra Gayatri

Om  
Bhur Bhuvah Svah  
Tat Savitur Varenyam  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi  
Dhyo Yo Nah Pracodayat

Let us meditate on Om, the primordial sound of God, from which the three worlds are emanated, the earthly gross world, *Bhur*, the more subtle, etheric world, *Bhuvah*, and the ultra subtle one, *Svah*. We adore *Varenyam*, the supreme, ineffable Self, *Tat*, the creative energy and giver of life, that reveals itself in the sun, *Savitur*.

Let us meditate on the radiant *Bhargo*, light, *Devasya*, of God, *Dhimahi*, that destroys darkness, ignorance and vice. God we constantly ask you to light our intellect, *Dhyo*, with your light.

The mantra of *Gayatri* is a powerful, universal prayer, from the *Vedas*, of which it has the essence. It nourishes and protects the *Jivis*, the persons, dissolves the negative karma, if our intentions are good and our commitment is precise, it protects, purifies and brings to Illumination. It should be celebrated at least three times a day, in the morning when the sun rises, by the hour of *Brahma*, that is between four and eight o'clock, the more sattvic hours compared to the following ones, again at mid-day, when the sun is high in the sky, and finally at sunset or between four and eight in the evening, in the other time slot that is purer and more powerful in the day.

But Sai Baba broadens the recitation of *Gayatri* to every moment of the day, also at nighttime, while showering, too, to purify mind and intellect together with the body. He says “you may ignore or forget about the other mantras, but you should recite the *Gayatri*, at least a few times every day. It will protect you from the evil wherever you are. The *Gayatri* divinity is *Annapurna*, the mother, the force that animates all life. Do not forget it.”

The divine mother - the cosmic force, the one that in quantum language may be called energetic field, in which everything is unified and immersed, from macrocosmos to microcosmos - reflects our thoughts, our desires and our true will, in harmony with mind and heart.

To her we should dedicate every intention of our soul and every spirit of initiative, as she is the first and the last reality that pervades and nourishes all, including all our wishes of each epoch. This is why the *Gayatri* mantra, recited to call the mother that defines everything that has been created and continuously remodels and restores them, is so important and powerful.

All the mantras should be sung in right tune and with correct pronunciation, considering at least the global significance, usually for three times or a multiple of three, or only once, as the mantra of food. Three is the number of *Trimurti*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, that is God as creator, conserver and renovator, nine corresponds to the divine number. In the beginning and at the end of each mantra one should sing

*Aum*, the sound of creation, three times in the beginning, once at the end and, as conclusion of the repetitions, three times the word *Shanti*, peace. The purpose of praying before eating is to eliminate all the impurities from the food and the recipients used and the negative influences the food has acquired before, during and after its preparation.

In the food we eat, there are not only physical impurities, but also the more subtle impurities of vibrations and thoughts of those that cultivate, collect, assemble, sell, buy, cook, prepare and serve the food. Impurities that we cannot be conscious of nor get rid off. This is why it is important to recite consciously the prayer of offer, if we want to eat pure food.

This does not mean that we can offer to the divine any type of food, only what has been considered as such the by creative forces can be offered. It is senseless to think that God could bless what he does not allow to eat. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Krishna* teaching *Arjuna*, says: “if someone offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water, I will accept it”.

While we eat, we should not act nor think negatively or pointlessly. If we speak with excitement, we get excited. Since mental tension is one of the main responsables for the damage caused to our health, we should learn to keep our emotions under control, particularly while we eat, and try to remain serene. This is why we should avoid watching or listening to television, movies or other things that might cause mental anxiety.

Our state of mind influences at a subtler level the food we eat and its assimilation. The food determines our thoughts that will define our future life. Therefore, if we are angry, it is better not to eat until we calm down and slowly drink some water, lay down or walk apace for a while so that our anger goes away.

“As is the food, so is the mind, as is the mind so are the thoughts, as are the thoughts so is the behavior, as is the behavior so is the health”, says Sai Baba, specifying that we should attentively evaluate before accepting the offer of such an intimate and precious thing as food.

We should not be involved with heavy sentiments, especially while eating. Respect for the three P’s, says Sai Baba, purity, patience and perseverance, guarantees lasting happiness and freedom from illnesses.

## VEGETARIAN PROFILES

### *From ancient texts*

It is written in the Genesis: "Then God said, «I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be your for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food». And it was so".

And Isaia says: "The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy each other".

A hebrew Talmud recites: "Who saves a single life saves the entire world".

In the *sutra*, Buddha says that he who kills an animal, commits five serious crimes. "He is guilty of having ordered to capture that animal. Because an animal that is being dragged, trembling and reluctant, feels pain and torment. Because he orders to kill the animal. Because the animal, at death, feels pain and torment. Because he then restores inconveniently, that is why he commits the fifth serious crime."

"In the future there will be ignorant people saying that many precept Buddhists permit the eating of animals. They like the taste of meat from past habits, they pronounce these words to agree with their visions. But in reality buddhas and the wise ones have never said that meat can be eaten."

"If no-one eats meat, then no-one will kill living creatures for food. Killings are for the buyers, thus buyers are like the killings". "Meat-eaters commit countless faults, thus vegetarians hold countless virtues."

"Living creatures...are in turn fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters to each other... frequently become relatives to each other. Due to these relations, to me all creatures that eat meat, at the same time eat their relatives." "I see that in all the worlds, the cycle of birth and death, the intertwined animosity and falling onto the evil paths are caused by eating

meat and killing. Such behavior increases hatred and anger and will make living creatures incapable of escaping from suffering.”

“It is more important to prevent an animal from suffering, rather than sit and think of the vice of the universe, praying with priests”.

The *Veda*, the most ancient existing writings, passed forward by *rishi*, the great wise ones of remote past, warn that “man becomes worthy of salvation when he does not kill any living creatures...he who kills animals cannot find pleasure in the absolute Truth”.

On the other hand, the first divine incarnations, the first avatars in the beginning of time, were in animal form, fish, wild-bore, turtle, and a body of half man, half lion.

Also Mohammed states that he who is good towards the creatures of God, is good towards himself.

In the “Essene Gospel of peace” Jesus says “For I tell you truly, he who kills, kills himself, and who eats the flesh of slain beasts, eats of the body of death. Do not kill men or animals”. And he adds “eat all fruits of trees, and all grasses of the fields, and all milk of beasts and honey of bees, while the rest is of Satan and through the path of sin and illnesses conduces to death”.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says “if someone offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it”.

When Lord Rama, the avatar from fifteen thousand years ago, went to the forest to practice archery with the preceptors and his brothers, he refused to shoot on birds or animals of the forest, teaching us not to kill.

Sai Baba says “You must not sacrifice a lamb that bleats, a horse or a cow, but your own animality, beastly lust, greed, hatred and malice”, warning us that the first step towards spirituality is to be vegetarian. And he adds “some of us define themselves devotees of Sai, Rama or Krishna and then eat chicken. How can they consider themselves true devotees? Thus all of us, indian or strangers, should stop eating meat”.

## ***Examples of vegetarians***

San Francesco (St. Francis) ate fruit, vegetables, nuts, bread and water from a fountain. On the other hand, how could he have perceived and written in his heart the Canticle of creatures, if he ate their blood and death?

San Benedetto (St. Benedict), too, dictated a vegetarian rule.

San Giovanni Crisostomo (St. John Chrysostom), one of the fathers of the Church, said of Christians “we behave like wolves, like leopards, or even worse than them, because nature has foreseen them eating like that, but we, to whom God has given word and sense of justice, have become worse than ferocious beasts”.

Pythagoras used to pay fishermen so that they would throw the fish they had caught back in the sea and warned “avoid corrupting your body with impure food. The Earth offers a great quantity of pure foods that don’t provoke blood shedding or death”, “whatever man does to animals will be repaid to him with the same currency”. “Men will continue to kill each other until they massacre animals. He who scatters death and pain cannot harvest joy and love”.

Plutarco, a Greek writer, in “*De esu carnium*”, writes “You ask what reason Pythagoras had for abstaining from flesh? For my part I rather wonder in what state of soul or mind the first man who did so, touched his mouth to gore and brought his lips to the flesh of a killed creature? How could his eyes endure the slaughter, how could his nose endure the stench? How was it that the pollution did not disgust him? Such a meal is truly monstrous! Why slander the earth by implying that she cannot support you. You call serpents and panthers and lions savage, but you yourselves, by your own foul slaughters, leave them no room to outdo you in cruelty; for their slaughter is their living, yours is a mere appetizer.”

“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, with your own hands, just as wolves and bears and lions themselves slay what they eat”.

“Boys throw stones on frogs as a sport, but the frogs do not die for sport. They die for real.”

Leonardo da Vinci has said “he who does not respect life, does not merit it”, “The time will come when men will look upon the murder of animals as they now look on the murder of men.” “It is true that man is the king of the animals because his brutality exceeds theirs. We live thanks to the death of others. Already at a young age I renounced to eating meat”.

Mahatma Ghandi who has written several books on vegetarianism said that “our error is to imitate inferior animals, because we are superior beings”. “I feel that our spiritual progress will inevitably lead us to stop killing animals in order to satisfy material needs”, “we should be capable of refusing to live, if the price of living was torturing living creatures”, “our kind is everything that lives”.

Leone Tolstoj defined eating meat immoral. “Pity is always the same sentiment, there is no difference between pity for a human being or for a fly”, “through killing, man suppresses his higher spiritual abilities, love and compassion for other living creatures and becomes cruel” and “the step from killing an animal to killing a human being is very small”.

Charles Robert Darwin affirmed that “empathy for the smallest of creatures is one of the most noble virtues a man can receive as a gift”.

Erich Fromm said that “man differentiates himself from animals for being an assassin”.

Albert Einstein affirmed “civilization has failed. We must build a new humanism, otherwise the planet will not be saved”. “A vegetarian way of life, with its positive effects on human character, would bring benefits to all”. “The world is the disaster you see, not so much for the doings of criminals, but for the inertia of the righteous who realize it and only limit themselves to watch”. “I have become vegetarian not only for health reasons, but also for ethical ones. I believe that vegetarianism can have a favorable impact on the destiny of humanity”.