

Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice, and sacrifice is performed by action. Know that action comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one; wherefore the all pervading Spirit is at all times present in the sacrifice.

— BHAGAVAD GITA.

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FOOD.

FOOD should not be too common-place to be the subject of philosophical inquiry. Some spend the greater portion of the twenty-four hours in labor that they may earn money enough to buy the food necessary to keep body and soul together. Others more favorably circumstanced spend quite as much time in planning what they will eat, how it shall be prepared, and how it will please them and the palates of their friends. After a life-time spent in feeding their bodies, they all meet the same fate, they die, they are laid aside. Grimy laborer and man of culture, sweat-shop worker and woman of fashion, butcher and soldier, servant and master, priest and pauper, all must die. After feeding their own bodies on simple herbs and roots, on wholesome food and rich viands, their own bodies in turn serve as food for the beasts and vermin of the earth, the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the flame of the fire.

Nature is conscious in all her kingdoms. She progresses through forms and bodies. Each kingdom builds up bodies to sum up the evolution below, to reflect the kingdom above, and to be conscious of it. The entire universe is thus made up of interdependent parts. Each part has a double function, to be an informing principle to that below, and to be food for the body of that above it.

Food is the nourishment or material which is necessary to the formation, function, and continuance, of every kind of body, from the lowest mineral to the highest intelligence. This nourishment or material is forever circulating from the elemental forces into concrete forms, thence into structure and organic bodies, until these are resolved into bodies of intelligence and power. Thus the universe as a whole is continually feeding on itself.

Through food beings receive bodies and come into the world. Through food they live in the world. Through food they leave the world. None can escape the law of restoration and compensation by which nature keeps up a continuous circulation through her kingdoms, returning to each what was taken from it and but held in trust.

By the proper use of food bodies are formed and continue their cyclic evolution of growth. By the improper use of food the healthy body will become diseased and end in the reactionary cycle of death.

Fire, air, water, and earth, are the elements, the occult elements, which combine and condense into the solid concrete rock and mineral of the earth. The earth is the food of the vegetable. The plant strikes its roots through the rock and by the principle of life bursts it open and selects therefrom the food needed to build up new structure for itself. The life causes the plant to expand, unfold, and grow into the form most expressive of itself. Guided by instinct and desire the animal takes as its food the earth, vegetable, and other animals. From the earth and the simple structure of the plant, the animal builds up its complex body of organs. Animal, plant, earth and elements, all serve as food for man, the Thinker.

Food is of two kinds. Physical food is of the earth, plants, and animals. Spiritual food comes from the universal intelligent source upon which the physical depends for its existence.

Man is the focus, mediator, between the spiritual and the physical. Through man a continuous circulation between the spiritual and the physical is kept up. Elements, rocks, plants, reptiles, fishes, birds, beasts, men, powers, and gods, all contribute to the support of one another.

After the manner of a lemniscate man keeps in circulation physical and spiritual food. Through his thoughts man receives spiritual food and passes it into the physical world. Into his body man receives physical food, extracts therefrom the essence, and through his thought he may transform it and raise it into the spiritual world.

Food is one of the best teachers of man. Want of food teaches the ignorant and slothful the first lesson of work. Food demonstrates to the epicure and glutton that over-feeding will result in pain and disease of the body; and so he learns self-control. Food is an occult essence. It may not appear so to the men of our times, but in the future man will see and appreciate this fact and discover a food which will change his body into one of a higher order. The reason why he fails to do it now is because he does not control his appetites, does not serve his fellow-men, and does not see the deity reflected in himself.

Food teaches the sober-minded man the lesson of cycles and of justice. He sees that he may take from nature certain of her products, but that she demands and compels in her cyclic changes an equivalent for them. When the law of justice is complied with man becomes wise and the raising of the lower into higher forms gains him entrance into the spiritual world from which he takes his inspiration.

The universe is food. The whole universe feeds upon itself. Man builds into his body the food of all of the kingdoms below, and draws from above

his spiritual food during meditation. If the order of evolution is to be continued, he must in his turn furnish a body for the entity higher than himself. This entity has its roots in his own animal body and is the indwelling intelligent spiritual part of the human being. It is his God. The food which man can furnish his god is made up of the noble thoughts and deeds, the aspirations, and the meditations of his life. This is the food of which the god-like body of the soul is formed. The soul in its turn is that power or spiritual body through which the one divine and intelligent principle may operate.



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