

Understanding the Gunas

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The mental state of a person in Vedic language is described in terms of *gunas*. The present state of mind of any person is a result of mixing of three gunas of nature called *tamas*, *rajas* and *satoguna*. In terms of states of mind they are called *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* and the nature of a person is called *tamsik*, *rajsik* and *satwik*.

Whether it is Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagwad Gita or the text of Ayurveda, all talk about these gunas. The Sankhya philosophy also says that a mixture of the three makes the cosmic mind as well as the human mind. Bhagwad Gita talks in great detail about the nature, yagna as well as diet depending upon these gunas.

A satwik diet is one, which makes a person full of *satoguna* and makes him or her with predominant satwik nature. The same is true for other two gunas. According to Ayurvedic text and in Atharvaveda, any food, which comes from the roots or underground part of the tree, is *tamsik* in nature. *Tamsik* foods should not be eaten raw. They should either be slow cooked or soaked in water for hours before consumption.

Foods from the top part of the tree like coconut, fruits, leaves and flowers are *satwik* in nature and can be consumed fresh, as they are. Food which comes from the middle part of the tree is often *rajsik* in nature.

Fresh, soaked, sprouted, natural food are often *satwik*, while old, leftover foods are *tamsik* in nature. Most *satwik* foods are naturally white.

Ramayana also has characters with different nature. Kumbhakaran represents a person with *tamsik* nature, Meghnad and Ravana with *rajsik* nature and Vibhishan with *satwik* nature. One can see that the diet of Kumbhakaran was left over foods, onions, radish, carrots and nonvegetarian food, all are *tamasik*.

Shastras also teaches us about *satwik* food. In Vedic knowledge, God is represented by the consciousness and whatever is offered to God is the one, which is offered to consciousness and hence all offerings to God are soul healing and soul nurturing food items. Only *satwik* foods are offered to God as one can live on *satwik* food forever. Examples are dry fruits, fruits and milk. One cannot live on *rajsik* or *tamsik* food; hence, they have to be taken in moderation only.

The offerings to God include honey, milk, curd, fruits and vegetables, etc. Panchamrit offered in Puja is a mixture of milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar is a classical example.

Yogashastra also talks about the role of *satwik* diet in great detail. It says people who eat less are yogis, people who eat in moderation are bhogis and people who eat a lot are rogis. The synonymous are *tamsik* for rogis, *rajsik* for bhogis and *satwik* for yogis.

In terms of proper diet one should eat dinner lighter than lunch, eat only natural food in the night and follow the principles of moderation and variety.



Lifestyle Modifications

- Sodium intake <2 g/day sodium restriction in patients with symptomatic HF.
- Fluid restriction <2 L/day.
- 2 vaccines: Flu and pneumonia.
- 2 restrictions: Say no to smoking and tobacco.
- Limit alcohol to <2 pegs per day.
- NYHA class II patients can opt for cardiac rehab program.