

Road to Nirvana goes through stomach

[Anil K Rajvanshi](#)

anilrajvanshi@gmail.com

Gautama Buddha, it is said, gained enlightenment when a village girl Sujata offered him *kheer* (rice pudding). After eating it he realized the noble middle path. *Kheer* gave energy to his brain and solace to his tortured soul.

Spirituality cannot take place on an empty stomach. At the same time enlightenment can not be obtained on excessively full stomach. There has to be a middle path. This is what Buddha found out.

Great food not only gives energy for the body but the taste and aroma provides balm for the soul. Body and soul are both nourished with great food.

The whole basis of life is food. Food provides energy for survival – the cornerstone of life and ultimately spirituality. It even provides energy to gods and could be the basis of offerings in the temples and shamanic rituals of animal sacrifice.

Enjoyment of food is like Yoga. If one really enjoys the taste and aroma of food while eating it then it helps focus the attention on the eating experience and is like a meditation. But for that the food has to be eaten slowly with proper chewing and should be relished. Both these things help in producing lots of saliva which not only helps in digestion but also stimulates the vagus nerve.

Also the food should be taken silently with the person being immersed in the experience. Talking, arguing and thinking of worries while partaking food is unhealthy.

With fast modern life we gulp down the food most of the times like animals in order to simply fill the stomach. Enjoyment of rich aromatic food allows the other senses to kick in and provides the wholeness of experience. Thus one of the exercises in mindfulness Yoga is to be immersed in the food experience.

Not only eating great food is enjoyable but cooking it is therapeutic since it allows the mind to focus on a single thought of cooking.

Vivekananda the great Indian Yogi used to be very fond of food and to him enjoyment in cooking and eating biryani was similar to what he experienced through deep meditation.

[HOME](#)

Published as a blog in [Economic Times](#) and [Speaking Tree](#).