

Eating Meat: Some Esoteric Considerations

During the course of esoteric development, the response of the physical and superphysical bodies to certain foods changes. These responses themselves, without some abstract reason as motive or justification, can cause individuals to modify their diet, eliminating certain articles and emphasizing others. These dietary changes are often brought about by the very effects of serious esoteric study, because it actually begins to transform the human sheaths. The dense physical body becomes more mobile and inwardly active. The individual organs become more independent of one another, especially the heart, spinal cord and brain.

This slight increase in organ autonomy creates an unstable equilibrium which may be attributed to an indisposition or illness, whereas it is but the consciousness of this enhanced mobility or independence of organs which formerly were not felt at all (being part of the sympathetic or involuntary nervous system), except when they were functioning abnormally.

The relation of humans to their food is only properly understood when we consider the relationship of humans to the other kingdoms of nature. Plants as a kingdom of life “work up” mineral substances into a higher organization and imbue them with life. The inorganic becomes organic and is permeated with life ether. While

humans cannot efficiently assimilate minerals in their elemental form, they are so organized physically that they are in a position to continue the process of development at the point where the plant plateaus. We may pluck a leaf or gather an apple, the organs of a plant, and develop them further within our own organization.

Animals also continue this process of further organizing plant forms. However, when humans eat flesh food, they leave unused those forces required to process plant food. Since the well-being of any organ consists in activating and using

all of its forces, the eating of flesh food is equivalent to a person saying, “I will do without my right arm. I will bind it up so that it can’t be used.” In like manner meat eaters condemn a certain sum of forces within their organism to inactivity. The unused organizations lie fallow, are crippled, become

hardened, and are carried through the person’s life as a foreign body. However, they remain undetected as such until the person embarks on esoteric training, whereupon the increased mobility and independence of the internal organs discloses this “foreign body” as a further source of uneasiness.

As a result of this unsettling experience, feeling the presence of an alien body within one, persons who have begun esoteric training may simply stop eating meat, not only because the sensibilities are offended, but also because it blunts a living force in them and gives the sensation that they are carry-

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ing an interior dead weight.

Additional reasons for the elimination of flesh food have been fully articulated in the Rosicrucian literature. They include the following:

(1) Greater demands made on the body to process the more highly organized animal structures, requiring more etheric and biochemical energy for digestion.

(2) Shorter retention of the life force and nutrients due to the more rapid disintegration of the animal product, resulting in the need for more frequent and/or larger meals.

(3) Unhealthy, even poisonous and carcinogenic substances are introduced into the body's ecology, produced as byproducts of animal metabolism (catabolites) and as wastes carried in animal blood and retained in tissue fluids.

(4) The existence of the subtler but no less affecting residue of the animal's desire body in the form of: (a) noxious chemicals generated by the animal's unnatural treatment while living and by an apprehension of its forced death; (b) the tendency to feel and act in a more "animal" manner, dulling the finer human sentiments and stimulating a martial, violent, even cruel nature. Or, expressed more esoterically: Flesh foods stimulate the instinctive life of the will, which is primarily active in the emotions and passions.

(5) Considerations of economy and practicality. The vegetarian diet is less expensive. Plant food is universally more



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available and renewable, has a far longer "shelf life" than flesh foods, and is far less likely to be a source of contamination and disease.

(6) The overproteinizing of the Western diet and the companion myth of the protein-deficient vegetarian diet.

(7) The compelling argument of land conservation, which states that a given area of crops cultivated for direct human consumption must be increased seventeenfold to feed animals that will provide an equivalent food value.

(8) The mounting debt of destiny devolving on humanity as a life wave will require balancing the books at some later time to redress the many forms of animal abuse and offset the massive dependence on the animal life wave as a primary food source.

In the final analysis, it may well be the most personal, and indeed selfish, consideration which causes many humans to stop using flesh foods in their diet. At first, we might take it on hearsay that animal meat militates against esoteric development. Accordingly, if reluctantly, we make the "sacrifice." But once having ceased from this now atavistic habit, we will find that in every way we and all life forms are the beneficiaries. We discover also that the vehement resistance to the discontinuance of meat eating among the general population is based on the fear of losing certain valued basic instincts (shades of a recent movie by this title?), aggressive passions, and emotions. Men, if not women, it is erroneously said, will become less "manly" and strong, less able to cope in a threatening world.

When the reality and blessings of the spiritual life shall be more generally acknowledged, humanity will realize that what is lost in the grosser instincts, blood lusts, and selfish inclinations will be immeasurably offset by enhancements of the inner life of the soul, and by the peace and freedom gained from living less adversarially and more in harmony with our total planetary environment. □

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