

Spiritual Fasting

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Means to Human Quality Enhancement

Life is a complex process and passes through many ups and downs clouding our minds with a high degree of stress, draining out our positive energies. Have our lives become like conveyer belts where we have not much control over our deeds or instead, we reflect patterns of the insane culture in which we live. And so we have millions of teenagers trying to find themselves in fashion, music, and subcultures. Growing up without identity, introducing Generation X. Cappuccino or espresso, cherry-red or turquoise, ranch-style or split-level, liberal or conservative, little empty circles of self-expression that ends in a spiritual vacuum. We see many persons slipping into depression, into hollowness, into meaningless living.

Today's generation is desperately trying to find a new spiritual identity. (We may or may not admit that) We have surrounded ourselves with a plethora of techno-gizmos that furnish an illusion of being in control. The feeling of mobility provided by computers, TV and internet are able to hide the powerlessness we have over our own inner will and emotions. This impression of power is a well-contrived veneer, hiding the uncontrollable storms of the soul, storms, fed by emptiness, hopelessness and depression that plague a cold super-computer world.

On the other hand we see numerous people making wealth through unfair means, running after material comforts in life without any limits. We also see examples of unlimited greed in form of Bank defaulters and others who cheated on public money for their own greed. There is no end to it.

So where is your line in the sand of wilderness of the world?

We have had numerous literatures on Meditation, Yoga, spiritual pursuits to calm own the mind and body, to look within and be composed. We practice many forms of prayers and even rituals to take our minds off from stress. We also restore to fasting for days as part of our religious rituals for self-purification and to de-stress ourselves. Fasting is a knife that cuts away superficiality, getting to the bone. Effective, because it is able to break up daily patterns

upon which you have become so dependent. When those patterns of pleasure are removed, you are left with your own internal resources. If those resources are bankrupt, then during fasting, you will come face to face with a vacuum that only God can fill.

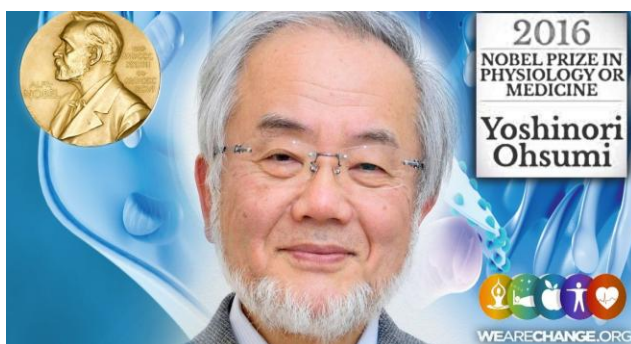
Fasting is to go without food for several hours from 12 to 24 or ever 36 hours. However, water must be taken as and when the body demands as during fasting a process of inner cleansing takes place which needs to clean the organs with the help of water.

Fasting has been advocated in almost all religions. In Hindu religion, eleventh day after the new Moon is a day when monthly fasting is carried on. Then there are many other days when fasting is done. Similarly the Bible [describes](#) the **40-day fasting** of Jesus and Moses. In Persia, people had to refuse food for 50 days, while modern Islam puts [restrictions](#) on consuming food during the holy month of Ramadan.



Fasting is scientific and it helps clean the inner organs is now proven through research.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/oct/03/yoshinori-ohsumi-wins-nobel-prize-in-medicine>



Yoshinori Ohsumi wins Nobel prize in medicine for work on autophagy

Japanese cell biologist is named 2016 laureate for his discoveries on how the body's cells break down and recycle their own components

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/lifestyle/health-and-wellbeing/161016/cell-strategy-how-fasting-makes-the-human-body-better.html>

Fasting has two very good benefits for us. Japanese scientist Dr Yoshinori Oshsumi's Nobel prize-winning work on autophagy has shown how damaged cells self-eat or self-destruct — keeping the body in good condition. The other benefit is that when the self-destruction occurs, there is the inducement of the growth hormone which allows for the generation of new cells.

Autophagy of the body means it cleanses itself of damaged, dead and unrepaired cells. It's a natural process where good cells create membranes that hunt out scraps of dead, diseased, infectious cells and gobble them up. The good cells strip these diseased cells into parts and use the resulting molecules for energy.

Autophagy requires the right kind of conditions for it to occur. Nutrient deprivation is the key activator of autophagy. When the body is on a fast mode it signals the brain that there is not enough food available and the body then goes back to stored foods. This condition allows for autophagy — where the cells first attack the old and junky proteins in the body. This happens because the insulin levels in the body dip and the hormone opposite to insulin, glucagon, begins to work in the body. When glucagon is activated, it starts looking for those cells and junk in the body which require to be cleaned. But even the slightest amount of food is easy to shut-down glucagon. It requires completely abstinence from food for 12 to 36 hours which is usually seen in many fasting practitioners. But they must drink plenty of water.

<https://lifepa.com/fasting-research-wins-nobel-prize-medicine-right/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/oct/03/yoshinori-ohsumi-wins-nobel-prize-in-medicine>

Fasting accomplishes two purposes. First, it reveals how much the flesh has taken control of your emotions. And secondly, it serves in breaking the flesh's hold upon the will. Fasting invariably brings to the surface deep seated fears which affect thinking and decision-making. It does this by challenging that complex human instinct called self-preservation.

The Physical fasting is simply a restraint from eating physical food: physical detachment. All religions have advocated Material Fasting; but the greater detachment is the spiritual fast: detachment from all desires of the self. **Spiritual fasting** has been practiced by saints over ages, detaching themselves from the material gains, aiming at spiritual gains. We have the example of Lord Buddha and Sri Sri Ramakrishna Parmahans in the recent past, who practiced spiritual fasting by detaching themselves from the worldly comforts in pursuit of the divine light. However, in day to day life for the common human beings, it may not be possible to stay away from home and family, from job or from any other work that brings them their livelihood. In such case how this can be practiced?

Spiritual Fasting is staying away from the GREED, in very simple terms, being with your value system. Greed that we see in many forms, people trying to accumulate for themselves and for their younger generations in form of houses, properties, wealth and material goods, which fulfills their ego and puts up a show of ornamentation but the hollowness within is neglected. Hence, it is imperative that, in the career building race we do not tend to neglect the health of our **INNER SELF** and ensure that the inner vacuum does not take place. The very indicator of inner illness is expression of frustration, suffering from a degree of insecurity. Our disturbed mind finds its expressions through our insane behavior, misbehaving with our parents, spouse, friends' etc. which is an outburst of our depressive status of mind. Let's resolve this and take control of ourselves.

Practicing Spiritual Fasting may look harder to attain, but abstaining from greed is the first step.. You may not have time for practicing various religious rituals in your busy life schedule but try to achieve higher spiritual goals by cleansing your mind and keeping away from the temptations of all kinds. You may try meditation in any form which will cleanse your mind. Even giving water to a thirsty person is a form of meditation, when spirit is involved in a good deed. At this very moment when you are offering water , you are connecting yourself with the Supreme being , may be even for a fraction of a second, but then you attained that status of purification through a good deed. Taking yourself away from negative actions is indeed a form of spiritual fasting, a form of self- purification.

Spiritual Fasting is simple, if you open up your mind and develop compassion & empathy towards the needy. Giving and sharing, understanding and responding to another person will help you reach a stage of perpetual happiness; happiness from within your inner self. Its like a slowly opening Lotus flower which emits soft and elegant inner beauty and purity. The **Bahai Temple in Delhi** is designed as a Lotus Flower, with a hall where anyone can meditate any time of the day.



The fifteen Laws of Life as advocated by Swami Vivekananda will actually help you practice Spiritual Fasting:

Swami Vivekananda, who lived from Jan. 12, 1863 until July 4, 1902, was a disciple of the Indian mystic Ramakrishna and helped introduce Indian philosophies to the West. Here are 15 laws of living from the revered Swami Vivekananda:

1. **Love Is The Law Of Life:** All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves, lives; he who is selfish, is dying. Therefore, love for love's sake, because it is law of life, just as you breathe to live.
2. **It's Your Outlook That Matters:** It is our own mental attitude that makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful; our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is [in our own minds](#). Learn to see things in the proper light.
3. **Life is Beautiful:** First, believe in this world--that there is meaning behind everything. Everything in the world is good, is holy and beautiful. If you see something evil, interpret it to mean that you do not yet understand it in the right light. Throw the burden on yourselves!
4. **It's The Way You Feel:** Feel like [Christ](#) and you will be a Christ; feel like [Buddha](#) and you will be a Buddha. It is *feeling* that is the life, the strength, the vitality--without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God.
5. **Set Yourself Free:** The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him--that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

6. **Don't Play The Blame Game:** Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers and let them go their own way.
7. **Help Others:** If money helps a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better.
8. **Uphold Your Ideals:** Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.
9. **Listen To Your Soul:** You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own [soul](#).
10. **Be Yourself:** The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves!
11. **Nothing Is Impossible:** Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin--to say that you are weak, or others are weak.
12. **You Have The Power:** All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.
13. **Learn Every Day:** [The goal of mankind is knowledge](#). . . now this knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside: it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows,' should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils;' what man 'learns' is really what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.
14. **Be Truthful:** Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.
15. **Think Different:** All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything

The above preaching of Swamiji will lead you to the path of Spiritual Fasting, which purifies the mind and spiritually strengthens the mind to open up to wider horizons of tranquility, harmony and peace.

You see a divine smile on the lips of Buddha, it is the outcome of ultimate purity. Smaller things are not able to disturb his spiritual peace. It is the result of spiritual fasting, which is more than just being away from food.

You too can practice Spiritual Fasting and achieve an elevated status of self purification and peace. You will be able to face difficult situations in life with calmness without being irritated and without misbehaving or losing your temper. It will help you groom your personality inside out.

Best Regards.

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