

Moderation

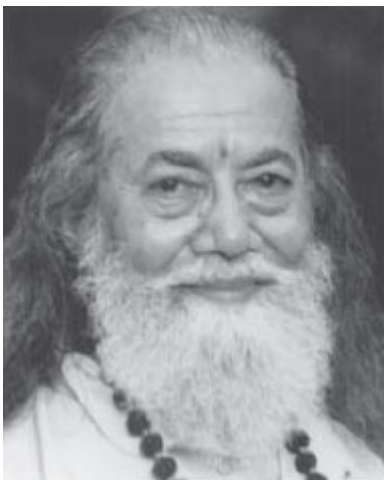
by Paramahansa Hariharananda

Human life is a rare chance and opportunity to grow. Life is short and there are ample obstacles, but in spite of that, you have immense strength and potentiality. To achieve success in life, you need to be careful, moderate, and balanced.

It is written in the Bhagavad Gita (6:17):

*yuktaharaviharasya yuktacheshtasya karmasu
yuktasvapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkhaha*

"The path of meditation requires a moderate, regulated life, avoiding too much or too little food, work, and sleep, or use of the senses. The attention must abide in the soul all the time. For such a person, yoga destroys all sorrows."



A life of moderation is the foundation of success. Moderation and balance are necessary in every step of your life. Even contemplation and meditation should be limited. Lord Buddha was a king's son, who left his house in search of Truth. Later, Buddha decided that he would not stop meditating until he was realized, so he let his body become diseased. Later, he was too weak to pursue his spiritual practice, and he realized that moderation was needed and he started to eat.

You have endless desires for money, pleasure, and possessions. The more you get, the more you want. The Bible, the Upanishads, the Yogasutra of Patanjali, the Brahmasutra, and the Torah all emphasize moderation. You have to find a limit and a balance in all these needs.

When appetite comes, think that God is giving it to you. You can live with very simple food. In southern India, people follow the principle of plain living and high thinking. Sometimes they cook the whole meal in one pot with rice, dal (lentils), and vegetables. Many Presidents, Vice-Presidents and scientists of India are from the South. They are extremely educated people who eat simple food. They make yogurt and churn it with water, adding a little salt and chili, which then becomes buttermilk. Their dress is also very simple. They work and live all over the world.

Make your food simple and wholesome, and it will give you a long and healthy life.

Lord Buddha ate the simplest food in the jungle. The five Pandava brothers - Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva - spent twelve years in the forest and the thirteenth year in seclusion, incognito, living a simple life, with prayer and contemplation.

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said to sleep moderately. If you avoid sleep your brain will be tired, and if you sleep too much you cannot have a good brain. Similarly, in meditation, when you pray or study, be regular and moderate.

If you live a life of moderation, as the Lord said, your practice of yoga will make you free from all miseries and suffering. Be moderate and disciplined in every aspect of your life. This is the steady path for your growth and success.