

# JOY: The Journal of Yoga

January 2004, Volume 3, Number 1

## **What Brings about Success in the Practice of Yoga: Avoiding Overeating**

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One of the aspects of Yoga that makes it appealing to so many people is the comprehensiveness of its teachings.

This comprehensiveness gives people guidelines and advice about all aspects of its discipline so one can make the best use of their time and effort in learning and practicing Yoga.

We are told what we can achieve from practice (a *sattvic* state), what stands in the way of our achieving those things (the hindrances) and those specific behaviors that bring success in its practice.

These are quite numerous and are referred to in the different scriptures that are considered to be the basis for the science, discipline and teachings of Yoga.

Some are quite straight-forward, such as diligent effort, while others are somewhat harder to understand and apply, such as detachment.

One of the practices that brings about success in Yoga is to avoid overeating.

This practice, though it sounds easy can be quite difficult to apply.

The taste of food and sharing food with others is one of the great pleasures of life.

Our culture and society seems to equate eating with eating more and at dinner parties we may be asked to eat to our hearts content.

Restaurants frequently have an all you can eat special or buffet that can easily tempt us to eat more than we need to or should.

We sometimes fail to understand that what we eat and how much we eat can create imbalances in our system in much the same way that drugs and alcohol can.

If we overeat, we may be placing too much of a strain on the digestive and excretory systems, forcing them to act in a sluggish and unhealthy manner.

We may overeat to escape some kind of psychological state that is not joyful or skillful.

We may be overeating as a part of our reaction to some serious eating disorder, such as bulimia or anorexia.

We may equate delicious food with healthy food, not realizing that delicious food may make use of many ingredients that could not be best for us to eat.

The food we eat may be excessively sweetened or salted, which can create imbalances in how we think, feel and act.

Yoga suggests and recommends that we eat just enough to provide us with the nutrition that we need and leave the stomach empty enough for liquids.

Yoga suggests that we eat with wisdom instead of with sensual desire.

Yoga suggests that we also eat at regular times of the day and avoid snacking.

Yoga suggests that we eat unprocessed food and food that is fresh and wholesome.

Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are recommended.

So, when we really look at what Yoga says about eating and food, we see that there is more involved than in just avoiding overeating.

But it is overeating that is considered to be one of the most debilitating and potentially harmful aspects of eating and diet that we have to look at if we want to achieve a degree of success in Yoga.

If one has a problem with overeating, it will serve as a hindrance to practicing Yoga.

It will take great will-power to practice.

If an individual has come to the point where they are aware of the ill-health that has been brought about through their habit of overeating, they may be able to see the need and make the effort that is required in practicing Yoga.

As they start to practice, and the system becomes more balanced and functions with a greater degree of harmony, the excessive desire for food and eating will become more manageable.

When we start to feel good and balanced from the practice of Yoga, we are less likely to desire things through the senses as a way to feel happy, satisfied, fulfilled or like we are living in the moment with the greatest degree of gusto and excitement.

Yoga is not about living in the moment with the greatest degree of excitement, stimulation and happiness, but about living each moment of one's life with balance, harmony and mindfulness.

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