

Abandon Poisonous Food

If the practice of egolessness begins to become just another way of building up your ego - building your ego by giving up your ego - it is like eating poisonous food; it will not take effect. In fact, rather than providing an eternally awakened state of mind, it will provide you with death, because you are holding on to the ego. So if your reason for sitting or doing post-meditation practice is self-improvement, it is like eating poisonous food. "If I sit properly, with the greatest discipline and exertion, then I will become the best meditator of all" - this is a poisonous attitude.

From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa ,</scrip

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"Abandon poisonous food" and "Don't make gods into demons" are warnings that only you know whether what you are doing is good practice ("gods" or "good food"). Anything could be used to build yourself up and smooth things over and calm things down or to keep everything under control. Good food becomes poisonous food and gods become demons when you use them to keep yourself in that room with the doors and windows closed.

From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron

Give up Poisonous Food

Since all virtuous thoughts and actions motivated by clinging to a concrete reality or to a self-cherishing attitude are like poisonous food, give them up. Learn not to cling, but to know the phantomlike nature of experience.

From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Ken McLeod.

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The next verse does not refer to dietary restrictions, but is a continuation of the same theme. Engaging in spiritual practice is very much like eating. The whole point of eating is to benefit ourselves: to nourish the body, to gain strength and vitality, and to rid ourselves of hunger pangs. Poisonous food defeats the purpose of eating.

As we engage in spiritual practice, we pollute our spiritual food with poison by remaining unaware of self-grasping and the egotism and self-centeredness that derive from it. If we do not discard these as enemies that afflict us but instead simply accept them, our practice is like eating poisoned food. There is no question that one can meditate assiduously, translate books and become a great scholar, or even an articulate teacher, and still have self-centeredness at the very core of one's involvement in dharma. Whether our practice is

as profound as Kalacakra, Mahamudra, or Dzogchen, or as straightforward as breath awareness and loving kindness, if we approach it with a mind that is grasping onto the inherent existence of phenomena, it acts as cause for further cycling in samsara. We may be trying to do something of benefit, but self-grasping pollutes the spiritual practice like a poison. It acts as a cause of further suffering and therefore should be abandoned.

Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training(first published as A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World), by B. Alan Wallace

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When we know that the food we relish is tainted with poison, we reject it immediately. In our practice we must be sure that any wholesome conduct is not tainted by the twin poisons of the self-grasping ignorance and the self-cherishing attitude. If the former infects our practice, we should immediately apply the antidote of meditation on emptiness. Should our practice be stained by the latter, we should cultivate the altruistic mind and compassion.

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Give up Poisonous Food

There is a saying: 'Wholesome deeds performed with selfish aims are just like poisoned food.' Poisoned food might look delicious and even taste good, but it quickly leads to certain death.

Thinking of an enemy as someone to be hated, thinking of a friend as someone to be loved, being jealous of others happiness and good fortune: all this is rooted in ego clinging. And wholesome actions, infiltrated by a clinging to the 'I' conceived as something real and solid, turn to poison. We should try to forsake all selfcenteredness.

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Copyright 1993