



“Bill Clinton has gone vegan too ... And he was known for his love of hamburgers!”

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Every animal knows what to eat by instinct. If human beings were the same, 90 percent of the illnesses would disappear, believes Dr. Nandita Shah. Instead we are literally eating our way into sickness with food which is unsuitable for us. Medicines cannot solve the problem if we do not remove the cause. Dr. Shah teaches people how to be their own best doctor by understanding what the root cause of their disease could be. Whole plant based foods is her mantra. Diabetes, for instance, is a disease of excess fat, and can be reversed by removing all the fat in the diet. And you know what? Milk is not nearly as healthy as we were taught it was ...



ARTICLES

INTERVIEWS

“Bill Clinton has gone vegan too ... And he was known for his love of hamburgers!”



Dr. Nandita Shah lives in Auroville, India. She has a medical degree from OMP Homeopathic Medical College, Maharashtra, India. She is a CEO & Founder of Sharan non profit organization (SHARAN stands for Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature). She organizes health seminars and workshops all over India, including Peas vs Pills, Reversing Diabetes, Heart Disease & Hypertension, Joyful Weight Release and 21-Day Disease Reversal Retreat where she teaches people how to reverse diseases with food rather than medicine. You can find more information about her work and vegan lifestyle on <http://sharan-india.org> (Foto: Miranda Rumina)

* Is it difficult for people to change their diet?

“It's very difficult. It's about making the changes in the mind also. We are conditioned about how and what to eat from the time we are babies. The very first thing our mothers teach us is what to eat. And very often the very first food they give us is milk. So most people grow up thinking that cow's milk must be good for you. They never really think about it logically, they just believe it. But the reality is that today cow's milk is causing a lot of diseases.”

* What kind of diseases?

“Today breast and prostate cancer are very common. Breast, prostate and even ovarian and testicular cancers are hormone dependent cancers. They are triggered and enhanced by the very hormones that we get with every glass of milk. In my seminars, I often ask how many participants know that smoking causes lung cancer. Everybody puts up their hand. Then I ask how many of them know somebody with lung cancer. Usually, three or four hands going up. Lung cancer is not that common. On the other hand, not many know that milk is connected to breast cancer, but 90 percent of participants

know someone who has breast cancer. What we don't realise is that we're taking a powerful carcinogen every day, thinking its a health food."

*** Because the cows are fed with hormones?**

"No. It's because the cows are female mammals. They produce estrogens and progesterone, which is normal. That's why you can have a baby boy with breasts when it's born or nursing from its mother. A few months later, these breasts will disappear. But now we're getting these hormones every day from cow's milk. Cow's milk is good only for calves.

We look after our cars better than we look after our bodies. We only fuel our cars with the best quality petrol ..."

*** But we don't stop and think about what is the best fuel for our body ...**

"Exactly! In nature every animal eats according to it's niche. The lion's food is one thing, the goat's food is something else and the cow's food is yet another. Though we may know what is good for goats and cows, we often don't stop and think about what is the best food for human beings. If we eat only the food which is suitable to human beings, nobody will get sick. Or at least 90 percent of the illnesses will disappear."



*** How do we know what is the right food for us?**

"Every animal knows what to eat by instinct. If you go to a farm and you see ripe fruit and vegetables what do you feel like doing?"

*** I would pick up the fruit ...**

"... and eat it. Exactly! This is instinct. If you see a chicken walk by, does your mouth water?"

*** Probably not.**

"Or a cow, or a pig, or a goat? Nothing. But if you're a dog, if you see the chicken, you may start chasing it. Can you see the difference between dog's instinct and human instinct? For example, we eat a lot of wheat – bread etc. But if you see a field of wheat, do you feel attracted to eat? No. But if you see fruit and vegetables, nuts, seeds, automatically there's an attraction. If we start eating only the foods, which are instinctual, then we won't get sick. You may have heard many people say, I've got gluten allergy, I can't eat wheat. You hear this often in the West, right?"

*** That's right. Almost everybody has a gluten allergy nowadays. It's a kind of fashion ...**

"But you know, it has a meaning. Wheat is not the food for human beings. Neither is rice. We don't instinctively feel like picking and eating it. We have learnt to eat it."

*** What is your opinion about gluten free diet?**

"We don't advise this, even if it's best. We just advise a whole plant based diet. That means you can eat anything that comes only from plants and it should be whole. Whole means no peeling carrots, cucumbers or apples, because all the nutrition is just under the skin. And you loose a lot of nutrition if you even peel the wheat grain to get white flour or the rice to get white rice. If we stop peeling everything and eat everything whole and everything only from plants, then we would be healthier. This is just step one. If you want to be even healthier then you will leave out the wheat and the rice and the things which are not suitable. Right now people can't change everything, and wheat and rice are still close enough to the food we are supposed to eat."

*** But meat isn't even close?**

"Meat has nothing to do with the food we are supposed to eat. Our digestive system is totally different from that of a carnivore. A carnivore's digestive system is three times the length of its spine; ours is twelve times the length of our spine. Animal products are decaying substances, so after being digested the remnants should leave the body as soon as possible. But if we eat meat, we absorb toxins while the decaying products pass through our long digestive tracts. This is one of the causes of colon cancer. We are causing diseases by eating food that's wrong for our species.

A carnivore will kill and eat its prey, but then it doesn't eat for a long time. A lion may not eat for as long as ten days after a kill. A dog needs to be fed just once a day. But a herbivore like a cow or a horse will eat and stop and eat and stop ... So do we. If you put nuts in front of me, I am tempted to eat them. Then I'll have lunch, dinner, maybe even a snack. Herbivores eat all day like this.

Also, herbivores drink by sipping but all carnivores drink by lapping. We sip, like the herbivores. So there are many differences between herbivores and carnivores. We've just learned to eat meat, but it's not our food. Milk neither."



Fruits are the best foods for us (Foto: Miranda Rumina)

*** What are the consequences of eating the wrong food?**

"Today we have a lot of cases of type 1 diabetes, which – studies have shown – may be caused by cow's milk proteins. Cow's milk protein is an antigen in our body. We produce antibodies to it. But the cow's milk protein and the pancreatic cells are similar. So the antibodies to the cow's milk also destroys the pancreatic cells. Studies show that those with type 1 diabetes are more likely to have been fed cow's instead of mother's milk at an early age.

We are literally eating our way into sickness. Man is the only animal that systematically makes his food less nutritious before he eats it. Instead of eating whole foods, we refine and process much of what we eat."

*** How do we do that?**

"Fruit is nutritious, sugar cane is nutritious, but sugar is only calories, devoid of all nutrition. Yet we add sugar to so many products in many different forms. Peanuts, sesame and sunflower seeds are nutritious, but we press them to produce oil which is largely only calories. These are processed foods, partial foods and unhealthy. What we need are whole foods."

*** Is that true also for peanut butter?**

"Peanut butter is made from only whole peanuts if you buy it in a health food store. You need to look at the label. If it says just peanuts, it's OK. But if you go to the supermarket, peanut butters have sugar, salt, oil and many other things inside. This is what processed food is all about."

*** So you would use whole olive instead of olive oil?**

"Right. And you can have lots of flavours. For example, here in India we have coconuts. So if you make vegetables and put coconut on top it gives lots of flavour. You don't need oil. If you would do this, you won't be overweight because there is fibre in the food which is filling. Today we find a lot of people who are overweight, because they're eating more calories and less nutrition. If your nutritional needs are not met, you feel hungry, but if you eat everything whole you get more nutrition and less calories. If you eat brown rice you'll eat only one bowl, but if you eat white rice you need two bowls or more. So now you're getting double the calories and less nutrition. If you eat everything whole and plant based, you'll start losing weight even if you don't count calories.

And cow's milk contains growth hormone. It's to make a baby calf grow to full size in 18 months. If we consume growth hormone with milk every day, then we grow taller, but also wider. We can see this, in East Asians who are generally slimmer than their western counterparts. Traditionally, East Asia never used milk. Milk became available there only in the last 25 – 30 years."

*** Except India?**

“Yes. But even in India the use of milk grew with the British. It has expanded since 1960. When I was a child in Bombay, which is a major Indian city, we couldn’t buy as much milk as we desired. The government rationed milk and every family could only get a small amount. There was no cheese. It is very different today, from just 40 years ago. Today India is the largest producer of milk in the world (and the country with the highest number of diabetics!).”



Today’s breakfast choices – Fruits. Whole rice idlies with Sambhar and Chutney for those who like local fare. Muesli with coconut milk for the Western Palate. (Foto: Miranda Rumina)

*** Apart from milk, kids are also very much conditioned with sugar ...**

“One of the reasons that we get used to sugar is because mothers think that they must force children to drink milk. Instinctively babies know that milk is not good for them. When cow’s milk is given to a baby for the first time, the baby spits it out. In order to make the baby accept it, the mother often adds sugar. The reason we have such a sweet tooth is to make us attracted sweet foods in nature. Fruit is one of the best foods for us. But now we can make any food more attractive, just by adding sugar. Most restaurants and fast food places add sugar to many items. At McDonald’s, for instance, everything has sugar except the French fries. Even the salad with the salad dressing has sugar in it. And if you have the French fries with ketchup, you have got sugar again. That’s why children love McDonalds. Adults do too, many a time.”

*** How can we become less dependent on sugar?**

“If you don’t add sugar to your food all the time, then you start tasting the real sweetness of all fruits and vegetables. Peas and carrots have a sweetness, and so do cashews or almonds. Taste a cashew. Eat it slowly and you will taste the sweetness. Onions too have sweetness. But one can of coke contains ten spoons of sugar. When you eat all this sugar, your threshold for sweet goes higher. Now you need more sugar to taste the sweetness. And now you don’t taste the sweetness in cashew anymore. So if we cut out all the sugar in our diet, our natural food starts tasting sweeter.”

*** Do you recommend that people give up sugar all at once, for example when they come to your 21-day Disease Reversal Programme?**

“Yes. But we offer alternatives to everything. Instead of sugar you can have dates. You can make a date paste and add it to things. You can have all the fruit that you want even if you are diabetic. You can have raisins and dried apricots. The raw food people even make wonderful cakes with dates and nuts. It’s delicious, even more delicious than normal cake.”



Evening Snacks – a variety of healthy vegan open sandwiches (Foto: Miranda Rurrina)

*** What is the most difficult item for people to give up?**

“Different people have difficulties with different things. But the things we have difficulty leaving most are sugar, oil, tea, coffee, milk and meat – because they are addictive. Let me explain. If I tell that you can have no more milk or dairy, and that includes cheese, butter, cream and yogurt, how do you feel?”

*** I feel OK, because I don't like milk. But I understand it can be scary for some people.**

“It's the same feeling as if you're a smoker and are asked to quit smoking. But if I were say to you, 'no more carrots', how would you feel?”

*** No problem.**

“Exactly! If I say no more peas, no more oranges – no problem. No more dairy – wow! No more coffee – again a problem! These are addictive substances. We have to leave them the same way that we would leave any addiction. For some people it can mean to cut it out completely, for others, it means to reduce gradually. But after stopping, if you take them once again, you can become addicted again. You have to understand that this is an addiction, and we have to handle it the same way as we would any other addiction. In my seminars I suggest, to people who are unable to leave these things, to leave things step by step. First you leave the milk and cut down meat, sugar and oil. Second step: remove the meat and start having more and more raw vegetables. Step three: stop the oil and sugar.”

*** How do you replace oil?**

“Instead of using salad dressing with oil, you can make a tahini dressing. You use sesame butter, which is made just from crushed sesame, and you add some garlic and lemon juice, salt and water. It's a fantastic creamy dressing. Today I had a salad: rucola with some spring onions and a little bit of purple cabbage and some tomatoes. It was very colourful and then I added some roasted peanuts on top. And a little bit of herb salt and lemon juice. It was great, because you get the flavour of oil from the peanuts. Instead of peanuts you could put sunflower seeds, chopped almonds or walnuts. I also make amazing mayonnaise.”

*** How do you make mayonnaise without oil?**

“Soak cashews overnight or at least for two hours. Then pour out the water and put it in a blender. You add a little bit of onion – it gives a sulphur flavour of eggs. Then you put mustard, lemon juice, salt and pepper, and maybe a bit of water. Blend it together, and it's just like mayonnaise. When you make classical mayonnaise it's one egg and one bottle of oil – all the things we don't want to eat. But mayonnaise from cashews tastes identical and its relatively healthy. Nobody will know the difference.”



Snack time! (Foto: Miranda Rurrina)

*** Some diets, even ayurvedic, recommend different types of food for different constitutions or blood types. There are so many models, that sometimes it's difficult to figure out what to eat at all ...**

"I just say, go by instinct. Some diets say no tomatoes, but if you see a tomato hanging do you feel like eating it? Yes. So – no problem. Once you have cleaned out all the things that we aren't supposed to eat, your body will start talking to you. If you need the nutrition from cucumbers you will be craving cucumbers. So we have to learn to listen to our body and then choose our food."

*** Do you buy only organic food?**

"Yes, because the nutritional value is higher. If you buy everything organic, you eat less. Even if organic food is more expensive, you're saving money. For example, I never feel like eating out, I feel like going home because my food is so good at home."

I also advise people not to peel vegetables and many fruits. You can do an experiment. Take a carrot, wash it well and divide it into three parts. The first part you just grate and taste. The second part you peel, grate and taste. And the third part you peel, grate and put in a glass of water for just five minutes, take it out and taste. This is similar to cutting the vegetables and then washing them. Many nutrients are lost, and so is the taste. I advise people to first wash the vegetables and only then to cut them. And never to peel them."

*** You started as a homeopathic doctor, but now you heal with food only. Why the change?**

"I changed because as a homeopathic doctor I saw that people were coming back to me again and again with the same problem. When I prescribed, I was in control of my patient's health. Medicines don't solve the problem because we are not removing the cause. Now I'm teaching people to be in control of their own health. To be their own best doctor. When animals are sick, they are in total control of their health. They know what to do. If a cat is sick she'll eat grass and clean up her system. They rely on instinct. But we don't know what to do when we are sick. We go to a doctor and often doctors make us even more sick or dependent on pills for the rest of our life."

*** And you can avoid all this with a plant based diet?**

"Yes. When you eat only plant based diet, even stress goes away. When the animals are stressed, they produce a lot of adrenalin. If you're milking a cow and she is not allowed to feed her baby, she's very stressed and you get all the adrenalin through the milk. If you force a hen to lay 250 eggs a year instead of 25, she's very stressed and we get that message through the eggs. If you take a cow to slaughter and she knows she's going to slaughter, the meat is full of adrenalin too. No animal wants to be killed. So people are getting very stressed because of all the food they eat. And today huge numbers of patients are on antidepressants. In fact there are more people on antidepressants than there are with diabetes and heart disease combined."

*** What about herbs and food supplements?**

"It's all OK. If somebody wants to take them they can. But you can't solve the problem without removing the cause. And the cause of a problem is not absence of one herb or supplement or another, it's something else. Today most diseases are caused by one or more of the following: excess fat, excess proteins, lack of fibre and empty calories or lack of nutrition. Fat is a cause of maximum diseases, because with fat you're lining your arteries and they get blocked. If you're blocking blood flow, automatically you are not healthy. Diabetes is a disease of excess fat. If you have fat in the muscle cells, the muscle cell becomes insulin resistant. Therefore we treat diabetes by removing all the fat (oil, butter) and animal products in the diet, because all animal cells contain lots of fat. The blood sugar levels just drop. They can eat as much fruit as they like and as much whole rice as they like. No problem at all, because sugar and carbohydrates are not the cause of diabetes; high blood sugar is the result of diabetes. The cause is insulin resistance and that's a result of fat."

Protein is another big cause of disease. Today people are trying to eat more protein but they don't realize that we are having more diseases because of excess protein: gout, kidney disease, acidity, osteoporosis."



Peas vs Pills in Auroville – with the cooking team (Foto: Miranda Rumina)

*** Many who go on a plant based diet are afraid that they won't be getting enough protein ...**

"Protein is the food for growth. You know, every mammal produces an amount of protein in its milk according to the rate of growth. A human baby grows to full size in 18 years. A cow grows to full size in just 18 months. So cow's milk has three times more protein than human milk. Cat's milk has nine times more protein than human milk, because a cat grows to full size in just nine months. A human baby doubles it's weight in six months and triples in one year. After that we never double our weight in six months, hopefully. So we never need as much protein, as a percentage of our diet, as we needed when we are born, because that's the time of maximum growth. The amount of protein in human milk is the same as the amount of protein in fruit juice. This means, even if you were a frutarian you'd be getting enough protein. Most of us are getting more protein than that. Nuts have protein, beans have protein. If you are eating some of these, it's impossible to be deficient in protein."

*** And we don't take all the pleasure away by removing oil, sugar etc. from our diet?**

"Bill Clinton once said ... Did you know that Bill Clinton is vegan? He became vegan in May 2010 and he gave his first interview on this subject in September 2010. By then he had lost 24 pounds. The reason he became vegan was because he had a stent put in (after having quadruple bypass surgery in 2004) and that stent was blocking up. So he did research and he decided to go on a plant based diet by himself, not even on the advice of doctor. If you see his face now, it's just glowing. And he says it's the first time that he's weighing less than he did when he finished high school. Clinton loved burgers, but says he likes what he eats now - the fruits and vegetables and nuts and seeds. He does not miss his earlier favourite foods."

*** Do you share his love for vegan food?**

"Absolutely! Only when we eat the food nature meant us to, do we really love what we eat. I really don't like to go out to eat. I love to eat at home every single day. I would never go back and eat animal products – not even by mistake!"

ALJA TASI

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