

Components required for cooking a meal

Preface

Till some years ago, cooking would begin only after smearing the floor with cow-dung, performing *pūjā* (Ritualistic worship) of the *chūlhā* and offering oblations of rice grains in its fire. This custom attracted vibrations of Deities towards the food. *Jīvās* (Embodied souls) that ate such a food would benefit at the physical, psychological and spiritual levels. Today, barring a few houses in villages, cooking on a *chūlhā* has been forgotten. Firewood has been replaced by kerosene, LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) and electricity (For example - microwave oven). The process resulting from the use of these modern fuels or cooking equipment generates a *Tama*-predominant environment, to which negative energies are attracted. This pollutes the food, leading to an increase in the negative energy attacks on the *jīvās* that eat this food. If it is not possible to use *chūlhā* for cooking, then cooking while chanting the Name of Deity of worship and having a *bhāv* (Spiritual emotion) that 'I am preparing food for God' will help in preventing the attacks of negative energies. Besides, cooking with a *bhāv* that 'I am preparing this food as a *naivēdya* (Food offered to the Deity as part of ritualistic worship) for God' and chanting the Name of our *Upāsyadēvatā* (Deity of worship) while cooking also helps.

In the earlier times, water used to be stored in a copper vessel or a pitcher. Brass utensils were used for cooking. These metals/alloys attract as well as transmit *Chaitanya*. Such spiritual benefits are not obtained from the use of prevalent utensils made of stainless steel or aluminium. On the contrary, there is every possibility of formation of a covering of distressing energy over the food or grains stored in the utensils made of such metals/alloys.

Today, hundreds of cookery books are available in the market. They contain various recipes. These books give no consideration to preserving and enhancing *sāttviktā* (Spiritual purity) in the food while cooking. Hindu culture stresses not only on the ingredients of the diet being *sāttvik*, but the process of cooking being *sāttvik* too. This Text elaborates on various conducts such as how to sit on a cutter (a blade set obliquely on a stock for cutting vegetables), the vegetables should be cut to what size, why should Shrī Annapūrnādēvī & *Upāsyadēvatā* be remembered.

We pray unto the Holy feet of Shrī Guru that may all be motivated to chant and pray during the various steps of cooking as mentioned in this Text. - **Compiler**

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