

## EDITORIAL

## Digital Fast: Pressing Priority for Existential Mandate

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***The best of all medicines is resting and fasting.  
Benjamin Franklin***

Fasting came into existence in 5th Century BCE, when Greek physician Hippocrates recommended abstinence from food or drink for patients who exhibited certain symptoms of illness. (1) Fasting is a detox mechanism which cleanses multiple systems of the body and enhances health at physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual facets.

From BCE to 21st century CE, there has been a dramatic evolution of human civilization with paradigm shift in flow of cognizance and erudition. The most recent with unparalleled domination has been the emergence of digital era. Digital revolution embarked the utilization of computers and smartphones for easy accessibility of knowledge and services round the clock at the remotest of the

domains. This has all the more intruded the continuance of humankind during the onset of disastrous global pandemic of COVID during 2020. A recent report titled "DIGITAL 2022 – Global Overview" offers insights into digital trends, including daily time spent on the Internet and social media platforms. Across all devices, the average Internet user aged 16 to 64 spends six hours and 58 minutes online per day. South Africans top the list with working-age Internet users being online 10 hours and 46 minutes daily. Japanese, on the other hand, spend the least amount of time being on internet daily for four hours and 26 minutes average. (2)

Digitalization with internet usage for professional and personal concerns has become a continual and habitual mandate with its pro and con. The populace worldwide irrespective of gender, age and cadre have contracted in their nutshells of virtual world with multiple social media applications skimping the values of relationships and societal norms. This has adversely effected individual's mental well being.

Digital Fast is one such initiative towards abridging addiction of the virtual era which is flooding with easy, accessible and approachable informations from various arenas regardless of the authenticity. The terminology, known by myriad terms "Digital Detox," "Digital Sabbath," and "Unplugging" refers

to refrain using all connected devices voluntarily and deliberately – smartphones, computers, tablets, and so on – that plug you to the internet for a pre-specified amount of time.(3) Unplugging implies being fleetingly disconnected bestowing you sterling time with self and your clans and kins. This ensures transcending from nomophobia which is an uneasy feeling of being left out in absence of phone to an immense true sense of eudemonia.

Fasting needs to be in graded manner with few hours of abstinence to begin with (2-4-6-8) hours for persistent and enduring acceptance. Night is the resting time for physique as well as mind. The thoughts before sleeping as well as on waking should be the most positive inputs to the neurons rather than technological firings. So, Nocturnal Internet Fasting (NIF) similar to Overnight Oral Fasting (OOF) needs to be imbibed and practiced by one and all. Unplugging does not imply tardiness and backlogging of progress. Digital fasting incorporates one more quintessential aspect of smartphone usage while feeding your body during meal times as studies have proved screentime exploitation during eating lowers metabolism and distraction leads to flawed satiety progressing to overeating. It is one of the reasons of concerning obesity levels in America. (4)

Digital fasting is mandated as a speed-breaker on the highway of virtual world of artificial intelligence.

Driving is an enjoyable process in the journey of life which is another crucial and must occasion for unplugging primarily for safety concerns. Weekend Digital Fasting is an upcoming platitude which ameliorates vacation mood and strengthens both physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

The dictum is that wise and judicious use of technology is an asset but overuse, misuse and disuse becomes an ailment which needs heed. The author is of the opinion that digitalization with diverse social media applications is a unique metamorphosis with its boons and banes and public health experts ought to generate community awareness towards optimum utilization of technological gadgets and social media for astute influx and efflux of information during pertinent times with consistent fasting to begin with self.

*Celebrate few hours daily with Digital Cheat Phenomenon.*

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