



Doctors baffled as Indian man claims not to have eaten for 68 years

AHMEDABAD, India (AFP) - An Indian man who claims divine inspiration says he has survived 68 years without eating, drinking or relieving himself, baffling doctors who are unable to prove him an imposter.

Prahlad Jani, a 76-year-old whose extraordinary tale has won him a small band of devotees, took a dare and underwent round-the-clock surveillance at a hospital in Ahmedabad (news - web sites), the commercial capital of the western state of Gujarat. Clad in his trademark red sari, bangles and earrings meant to fashion Hindu goddesses, Jani managed to puzzle the Sterling Hospital's 400 doctors.

Neurologist Sudhir Shah said Jani was under watch for 10 days, with a closed-circuit camera running, and that doctors were convinced he did not break any of his vows, although there was no way of verifying whether Jani has pulled it off for 68 years.

"He has evidence of the formation of urine, which was reabsorbed on his bladder wall. The medical committee does not have any scientific explanation," Shah said.

Jani offered an explanation. He said he has been blessed and heard his calling when he was eight years old.

"I get the elixir of life from the hole in my palate, which enables me to go without food and water," Jani explained to AFP.

A vindicated Jani left the hospital Saturday and said he was retreating to a cave at Mount Abu in the neighboring desert state of Rajasthan.

Another doctor, Dinesh Desai, said the hospital hoped to test Jani again to verify his claim of a hole in the palate between his mouth and nose.

"We may get some answers then," Desai said.

Shah said it took the hospital more than a year to persuade Jani to undergo surveillance. He said he wanted the ascetic to undergo experiments at NASA, as Jani's supposed feat could come in handy for astronauts.

Report from Sudhir Shah

The below was sent to me from Dr Sudhir Shah. Jasmuheen

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Association of Physicians of Ahmedabad was invited to supervise the protocol of genuinity of a claim made by Mr. Prahallad Jani that he is not passing urine for a prolonged period and not taking anything orally including food or liquid for the same period.

Mr Jani is a male aged 76 years claiming to reside in caves of Ambajee near Gabbar for many years. According to him, he was blessed by Matajee at the age of 8 yrs and since then his demands for food and water disappeared and he did not require passing urine or micturating.

Association of Physicians of Ahmedabad is a nonbiased body made up of 20 committee members and 400 + members, all being the most reputed physicians or super specialists of the city. We decided to make a panel of doctors which included eminent Senior Physicians, Cardiologists, Neurologists, Neurosurgeon, Gastroenterologist, Surgical Gastroenterologist, Endocrinologist, Diabetologist, Nephrologists, Urologist, ENT surgeon, Psychiatrist, Ophthalmologist, Genetic counselor, Radiologists, Sonologists and many more. Secretary of association DR URMAN DHRUV took over the charge and the panel was headed by DR SUDHIR SHAH the eminent Neurologist of the city. Sterling Hospital agreed to bear the cost and sponsor the whole project and DR V N SHAH the eminent Diabetologist represented the hospital. Most of the committee members of our association were also kind enough to examine Mr. Jani and opine.

Mr Jani underwent an affidavit as suggested by the ethical committee of the hospital. He was explained all the facts of his condition and the critical points when the committee of doctors will advise him to stop the attempt or the committee will withdraw its association with him. Mr. Jani was kept in Neuro ICU for first 24 hours and then as per the protocol decided by the committee, he was shifted to a specially prepared room no 604 where the toilet was sealed off. Arrangement for 24 hour video camera shooting was made in the room. Round the clock security was arranged outside the room which was having a fully glass panel door.

A hospital staff was appointed on rotational basis to stay inside the room throughout 24 hours. Mr. Jani agreed to avoid bath for first 7 days and 100 ml water was given to him daily under supervision for mouth wash and was collected back after measurement. He underwent all possible investigations at the base line which all were normal. During the project, he underwent regular blood investigations daily or on alternate days as suggested by the team of doctors. We took serial ultrasonography of urinary bladder as many as two times a day and MRI of brain and gut. He was allowed free movement in the room and was offered the prayers as per his requirement.

The attempt started on 12th of November and the committee went on reviewing the reports daily to decide the further steps. Initially the attempt was to continue for 7 days but his health and investigations have allowed us to continue his attempt at the day 10 also. The committee is keeping a close watch on his all parameters. After day 10, the committee is satisfied with following matter

- 1 The protocol was strictly adhered to
- 2 Mr Jani has not passed or dribbled urine during these 10 days.
- 3 He has not taken anything by mouth or by any other routes not even water for 10 days.
- 4 All his parameters are till date within physiological range.
- 5 He has shown evidence of formation of urine, which seems to be reabsorbed from his bladder wall. However at present the committee does not have any scientific explanation for the same but the help of senior scientists and medical personnel of the country is being taken for the same.

Actually, the laboratory of DIPAS [Defence Institute Of Physiology And Allied Sciences] is involved from day 1 in this project. Professor Dr. Selwamurthy is guiding the project and the committee is in daily touch with this top scientist of the country. He has agreed to do further research and is likely to visit at appropriate time.

We are thankful to the whole team of doctors, sterling hospital esp. DR GADHAVI THE SUPERINTENDENT of the hospital and the person Mr. Jani.

THIS WAS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE OR DISPROVE ANYONE BUT AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND A NEW DIMENSION IN THE MEDICAL SCIENCE.

DR URMAN DHRUV - SECRETARY ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF AHMEDABAD

DR SUDHIR SHAH - NEUROLOGIST AND HEAD OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE PROJECT
DR V N SHAH - DIABETOLOGIST AND DIRECTOR STERLING HOSPITAL

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