

THE YOGA OF EATING

Not many people know that there is a yoga of eating called Hrani Yoga. Of all the yogas, Hrani Yoga has the greatest potential for speedy progress, because most people eat three times a day. Unfortunately, Hrani Yoga instructors are few and far between. In the last century, it was taught in the West by the late Bulgarian master Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov, who outlined its principles and practice in *The Yoga of Nutrition* and *Hrani Yoga: the Alchemical and Magical Meaning of Nutrition*.

Omraam taught that how you eat is more important than what you eat or how much you eat. Hrani yoga teaches you how to feed not just your physical body but your finer bodies as well: your emotional, mental and etheric bodies and three higher bodies beyond them. So we have seven bodies to feed. We used to have only six. Omraam liked to tell the story of how Zarathustra asked the sun god Ahura Mazda what the first people ate and Ahura Mazda replied “they ate fire and drank light.” They were able to do this because they didn't have physical bodies; they were beings of light. I believe we are evolving back to our former nature as beings of light and that raw food, sun-gazing, and spiritual practices will help us reach this state. Even now, there are a few people who are capable of living on water, air and sunlight. They are the forerunners of a new race.

Omraam and his disciples would make a sacred ritual out of each meal. They would begin with a moment of silence followed by grace. But the grace wasn't a prayer of thanks. They would recite in Bulgarian three times “the love of God solves all problems.” I think the reason for this is that you don't want to think about problems when you're eating because that would interfere with the entire process. They would eat in silence, but if you don't maintain inner silence as well, you won't get any benefit. So they said this little prayer to hand over their problems to God while they took a break.

Omraam called meditating on food rumination and meditation is one of the definitions of rumination. And just like a cow, while we're meditating on our food, we chew and chew and chew for several minutes till the food is absorbed without having to swallow. It sort of trickles down your throat. So you don't have to drink with your meal; your food becomes your drink. But between meals, you can drink sun-charged water or sun tea during the warmer months and boiled water or tea during the colder months. The next time you get sick, try drinking several cups of boiled water and see how much better you feel.

Chewing your food well is good for digestion not only in the stomach but in the mouth as well. Actually the mouth is kind of a stomach because that's where digestion begins and food begins to be absorbed. But because it's located in the head, close to the etheric, it can absorb the etheric particles of food, which have finer, more powerful energies for the etheric body, while the coarser particles are sent to the stomach to be broken down for the physical body. We get these finer energies immediately, long before the first bite of food reaches the stomach. We've all experienced coming off a fast feeling weak and wilted, but the very second food comes in contact with the tongue, we feel energized. This is due to the etheric energy extracted by the tongue. So the more you chew, the more your tongue is in contact with these etheric particles and the more energized you feel. So you don't have to eat much. You won't have time to eat much anyway if you chew every mouthful for several minutes.

Omraam taught that the etheric part of food is related to its color and freshness. So if you pluck a ripe golden peach off a tree you get 100 percent of the etheric energy. An unripened peach or one that's been sitting in a bowl for a few hours wouldn't have as much. You can also nourish your etheric body by taking a few deep breaths between mouthfuls. Think of your throat as a carburetor and food as gasoline. If you don't mix enough air with your gasoline, you won't get much power from your engine. So if you want all your spark plugs firing to power your etheric body, then breathe deeply while eating, and, when you're done, take a few deep breaths before getting up.

Omraam taught that you can feed your emotional body when you eat if you express love to your food and to the elementals that produced it. Savor its smell and taste. I was at restaurant once where a woman at the next table was in the throes of ecstasy when she started eating her food. When you do this, when you really appreciate your food, you will experience a profound sense of joy and gladness in your heart.

You can nourish your mental body by meditating on every aspect of your food: where it comes from, what it contains, its qualities and the role the four elementals play in producing it. Take a fig, for example. It came from a fig tree, it contains carbohydrates and sugars and fiber. So it's sweet and filling. The earth gave it minerals, the air and water gave it lighter elements and the fire of the sun ripened it and dried it.

Beyond the etheric, emotional and mental bodies, we have the causal, buddhic and atmic bodies. You can nourish these bodies while eating by having a profound sense of gratitude. Instead of saying “thanks for the grub,” and digging in, we should say grace throughout a meal with our attitude of gratitude.

The next time you sit down to eat, practice Hrani Yoga: eat in silence, chew each mouthful slowly and thoroughly for four or five minutes, love your food, meditate on it, and be grateful. Here is the yoga of nutrition on a nutshell:

The Yoga of Nutrition Izvor book P0204AN

- Prepare the table for a calm, orderly meal.
- Prepare the food with thoughts of gratitude.
- Say a blessing before starting to eat, thus befriending the food and harmonizing your vibrations with its vibrations.
- Be especially conscious of the first bite, chewing slowly until the food turns to liquid, taking deep breaths throughout the meal now and then, adding the fire to your meal.
- As you eat:
 - Maintain awareness of your utensils and other things on the table to avoid noise;
 - Eat with gratitude and love for the food, thinking of the sunlight, starlight, four elements, angel beings and humans who helped bring it to you;
 - Keep your movements and gestures gentle and graceful.
- Pause a few moments before you leave the table, and leave with your appetite not completely satisfied.
- Pause before going directly back to the next activity. And remember: each activity has its beginning, and it is the beginning that is the key moment. [p.18]