

SYSTEMIC YOGA INQUIRIES

With Ateeka

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Recently a student wrote me a letter inquiring about what comprises a "yogic lifestyle", specifically, "Do I need to be a vegetarian?" Following was my response to her.

The "vegetarian" question is always something that arises when a practitioner of yoga has reached a certain depth in her practice. Some traditions have strong views on what you "can" and "cannot" eat. In Systemic Yoga, what is most important is that we live in integrity and honesty with our choices. When we expand our sensory perceptions through our tissues and beyond our skin, we are able to make informed moment-to-moment choices in harmony with our environment. As we become more aware of the inner movement constantly changing within our bodies, we are able to better distinguish what choices are coming from physiological needs and which are arising from the emotional field. Listening to the body's true, moment to moment requests allows us to feel what is just right for us. Generally, food choices that are made from a wise, inner body inquiry will provide us with more clean pranic energy that we can circulate and conserve within our body.

Make your choices from a place of JOY. Choices made with an attitude of abstinence or rigidity, even if they are the healthiest food in the world, will not nourish us deeply. The attitude of "abstinence" is one of deprivation and does not allow for deep assimilation of the energy of the food. Food taken in with pleasure, joy and from a perspective of YES provides true assimilable nourishment on all levels.

It is obvious that we can make educated food choices. Mass produced factory farmed animal products, and mass produced produce as well, can carry a vibration of fear and consumerism. The way that much of our food supply is produced is not economically or ethically sound. As you fine tune your perception of your ever harmonizing body, you will find that you will simply not be attracted to these prana deficient food sources. Your resonance (electromagnetic field) will be attracted to more live, vital, clean and ethical sources of nourishment. Your choices are extensions of your energetic field.

Be adaptable. We are experimenting with becoming “open systems.” Physics tells us that when new energy is introduced into a system, it grows, changes and evolves. Its substances are refined and changed but do not decay. Open systems are highly interactive with their environments; they are adaptable and can easily digest and assimilate energy from many different sources. If you are traveling, try to adapt your choices to the environment that you are experiencing. Food sources produced and prepared locally will carry the vibration of the locale and you will be able to discover a culture from its energetic field. Be an open system and allow new information into your being. Of course I am not suggesting that you eat in a fast food chain in America simply because it is a part of American culture. But experiment with new experiences whenever possible. This makes us much more complexified and vital systems. There is an old/new concept that has been dubbed “the 100 mile diet” where we are encouraged to take in food that has been naturally and seasonally grown and produced within a 100-mile radius of where we live. It can be an interesting experiment from a nutritional, economical, ecological and pranic perspective. Again, the key is to maintain honest, adaptable, honest, low impact choices without rigidity, as guided by your body’s constant feedback.

Although we are currently discussing food choices as a source of prana, remember that this vital energy also comes from many more sources such as breath, sun, movement, intimacy, companionship, contact, creativity and pleasure. We can absorb and assimilate prana, vital life force, from all these sources and learn to recycle and conserve the treasure of prana within our own system, without excess waste.

Systemic Yoga offers a way to access inner body and field sensations and wisdom that help to guide our choices. In this way, the inquiry into our own somatic experiences becomes our own inner healer. We can become aware of imbalances within our system and ecosystem before they fall too far out of balance, lose large amounts of vital life source energy (prana) and require time and extra pranic effort to return to a state of coherence. Naturally healthy systems produce little waste and rarely take in excess. One element balances and harmonizes another. Health is in a state of constant flux and our very wise systems are always self-adjusting, we are all naturally prana-charged, radiant conductors of health when we choose to be. In this experiments of Systemic Yoga, we sense and explore how we can become more sensitive to our true pranic needs and how to remain in awareness of our constant connection to Source Energy, the Field.