

Rasa - Flavor

Ayurveda teaches us the importance of different tastes in our cooking; that we should experience the range of flavors in what we eat. One scholar also described rasa in terms of our emotions. He wrote that there is a range of 9 different emotional states that we go through as we progress in our spiritual development. As we progress on our spiritual path, we experience these emotions at a faster pace, and do not stay in any one state too long. So we move from scared to romantic; from compassion to odious all in our daily activities. It made me think of the brilliance of some playwrights -- like Shakespeare, who are able to include character developments that are as rich and filled with rasa -- brilliant illustrations of each emotional "flavor".

Ansanas



Salambasana
(hands interlaced)



Lunge



Eka Pada Bhekasana



Salambasana



Parsvakonasana



Natarajasana



Dhanurasana



Eka Pada Raja
Kapotanasana prep



Eka Pada Raja
Kapotanasana I



Anjaneyasana



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Application. In hatha yoga practice, I enjoy considering the rasa as part of the sequence. Asanas affect the different emotional states. The most obvious example is savasana, which delivers us to a state of stillness, while the warrior poses remind us of our courage, and backbending poses (featured in this lesson) move us to a joyous place as we take our focus to expanding the physical area of the heart.

Photos by Alyce Henson and Joel Wright
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