SN 46.51 — SN 46:51 Food (for the Factors for awakening) | Āhāra Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Food (for the Factors for awakening)

Āhāra Sutta (SN 46:51)

"Monks, I will teach you the feeding & starving of the five hindrances & of the seven factors for awakening. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak....

Feeding the hindrances

"And what is the food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen? There is the theme of beauty. To foster inappropriate attention to it: This is the food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or

for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is the theme of irritation. To foster inappropriate attention to it: This is the food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There are boredom, weariness, yawning, drowsiness after a meal, & sluggishness of awareness. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is non-stillness of awareness. To foster inappropriate attention to that: This is the food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are phenomena that act as a foothold for uncertainty. To foster inappropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen.

Feeding the factors for awakening

“Now, what is the food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for mindfulness as a factor for awakening [well-purified virtue & views made straight]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities… once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities… once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for rapture as a factor for awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen calm as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen? There is physical calm & there is mental calm. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen calm as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen? There are themes for tranquility, themes for non-distraction [these are the four establishings of mindfulness—see MN 44]. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen.

“And what is the food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity… once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for equanimity as a factor for awakening. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is the food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.

Starving the hindrances

“Now, what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen? There is the theme of unattractiveness. To foster appropriate attention to it: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sensual desire, or for the growth & increase of sensual desire once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen? There is awareness-release [through goodwill, compassion, empathetic joy, or equanimity]. To foster appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen ill will, or for the growth & increase of ill will once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen sloth & drowsiness, or for the growth & increase of sloth & drowsiness once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen? There is stillness of awareness. To foster appropriate attention to that: This is lack of food for the arising of

unarisen restlessness & anxiety, or for the growth & increase of restlessness & anxiety once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. To foster appropriate attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen uncertainty, or for the growth & increase of uncertainty once it has arisen.

Starving the factors for awakening

“Now, what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for mindfulness as a factor for awakening. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities… once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that are skillful & unskillful, blameworthy & blameless, gross & refined, siding with darkness & with light. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of analysis of qualities… once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen? There is the potential for effort, the potential for exertion, the potential for striving. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen persistence as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of persistence… once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for rapture as a factor for awakening. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen rapture as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of rapture… once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen calm as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen? There is physical calm & there is mental calm. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen calm as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of calm… once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen? There are the themes for tranquility, themes for non-distraction. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen concentration as a factor for awakening, or

for the growth & increase of concentration… once it has arisen.

“And what is lack of food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity as a factor for awakening once it has arisen? There are mental qualities that act as a foothold for equanimity as a factor for awakening. Not fostering attention to them: This is lack of food for the arising of unarisen equanimity as a factor for awakening, or for the growth & increase of equanimity as a factor for awakening once it has arisen.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 2; SN 22:122; AN 5:51