

YOGAMAIL

The Industry Journal For Yoga & Human Potential

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Jan - Mar 2010 ISSUE

**Prana &
Pranayama**
*Life force & science
of breathing*

Prana Vidya
*A knowledge to
be reckoned with*



PROFIT & CHARITY

Message from Master Mani

We run yoga courses and also run a charity organization. There are many yoga studios which run yoga schools but have no charity motive and there are yoga based organizations which run solely as charities. Yoga and charity seem to be as synonymous as yoga and high fashion, yoga and Beverly Hills, and yoga and high profits. It is a fact that yoga is among the top notch earners in the well being industry and given another 20 to 50 years it will become the number 1 top earner in that era's multi trillion dollar industry.

It is often stated that you attract monkeys if you pay peanuts, and that is true, not in a negative or derogatory way but a factual, real life manner. I have been to ashrams and charitably run yoga institutions and found that the will to teach is lacking and very often the instructors will find as much excuse as possible not to do their duties. I sense that this is due to non compensation. However, I have to add that there are always a few highly charged up individuals who are absolutely dedicated to teaching without any compensation due to their motivation in the belief that yoga brings about moksha (liberation) and that those who are taught yoga can be free from the wheel of samsara (wheel of life). These are rare beings who can be counted with your fingers. However the need for teachers cannot be limited to a small group of individuals, so how do we ensure that there is a continuous supply of highly charged, capable, brilliant, creative and dedicated teachers? Well, the answer is simple - get

the best and give them corporate rates (ie. pay them what you would pay an aerobics instructor or a master trainer or a self development coach). You could start somewhere but don't have to resort to telling them to teach for free or karma yoga (yoga of detached work) or seva (service to organisation or teacher).

Some teachers may have the opinion that yoga should be non commercial (whatever that means in their minds). Yet they may be the first to protest if they are not paid or paid less. The same self righteous instructor may drop a lower paying class in order to hop to a higher paying class, so sometimes there is a lot of hypocrisy in this industry but I know its due to a split of awareness - they think that yoga is spiritual and money is anti-spiritual. This basically sums up their ignorance. As I always ask the super ignorant new instructors who come with a great passion to teach for free as a service and argue with me as to why money has to come into the picture. My response has and always will be: "Go ahead". And always without fail they will end up super commercialized (the definition of dropping lower paying classes for higher paying classes). So rather than hiding behind karma yoga, charity and seva, we have opted for professionalism in charging for our classes and courses, giving the best services, paying those who work with us (that is not asking anyone to work for free). Although we have not reached corporate pay packages, I do realise that has to happen eventually as we

grow and as instructors need to live and prosper. Otherwise we may end up in the dark ages of yoga, where the genuine teachings ended up in the caves, forests, and ashrams, and eventually the art and science of yoga was almost wiped out, except fortunately some were preserved in ancient manuscripts and a rare few through family traditions.

Here in our organisations, we are documenting and preserving everything that we teach through modern technology. This involves costs and we require professionals to help us in many aspects of work, research and modernisation of teaching technology. Getting the best brains to promote and let the whole world know that yoga is a science that is crucial and absolutely necessary to preserve the sanity of this planet. However, this is an uphill task and very often, it is the yoga practitioners themselves who are against this modernisation process. They seem to think that yoga should be charitable and view all efforts to promote yoga as a plan of the devil.

My teachers said that yoga should be brought to every home and my question is how to do this? Through charity and begging for financial help from rich benefactors and later bow down to them to make them feel like VIPs and make them trustees and committee members who will politicize yoga? As long as I head our organisations, this will never happen. I think those who have learnt under me, those who have worked with me would understand what I mean, but this doesn't mean that one can't do what they want to do to help yoga flourish. By all means please go ahead. But don't expect me to thank you all the time or make announcements, etc. If you understand

that yoga will bring emancipation, will end suffering, heal and dissolve diseases, bring joy and harmony to the world, then it is the duty of everyone to do this.

Donations to places of worship and donations to gurus are abundant – do you know why? It's because it is a general idea that by doing this one gets to go to heaven or gains merit. I have always asked myself which is greater? Doing something for scoring merits and going to heaven? Or doing something to eradicate diseases and the suffering of mankind, and bringing joy to all? I would rather choose the latter. I would go out of my way to help mankind, even if doesn't bring me any personal merits or denies me a chance to go to heaven (before that you have to ask me whether I believe in these concepts and ideologies – maybe hell and heaven is right here? Well just maybe...?) So in my many years of being in the yoga 'industry', I have learnt that money is necessary and that almost 99% of the people involved in working and teaching do need compensation, no matter what they may say or do and I need full support from those not working in yoga organisations and not teaching yoga, to help me in the propagation of this amazing science. Talk to me directly, this is the safest and fastest way. So let's move ahead, time is precious and it's running fast! YM



Master Manickarajan

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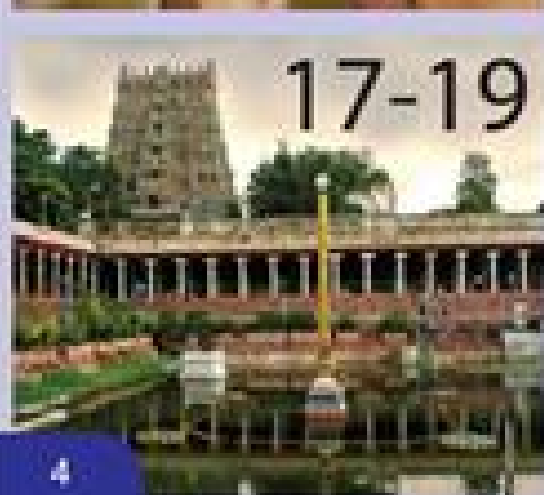
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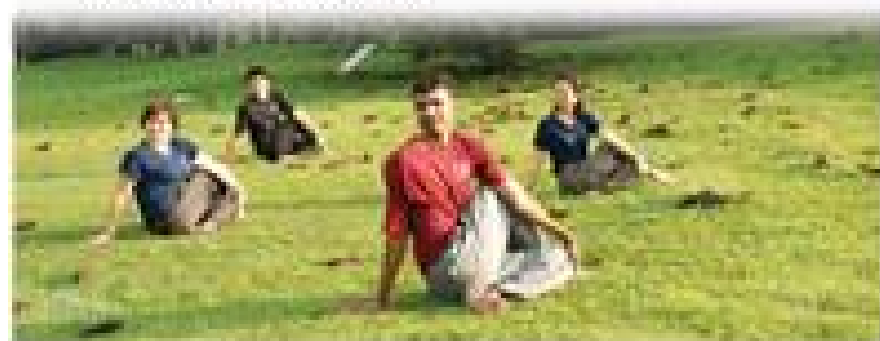
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Calling all yoga enthusiasts, we are currently seeking your contributions either written or photographs (with catchy captions) on anything and everything about yoga. Selected works will be published in our next issue. In every issue, there will be a lucky winner who will receive a whole month of free Hatha Yoga Classes worth RM60! So get those pens and cameras out and start snapping and writing. All works should be emailed to

yogamail@malaysianyogasociety.org

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the world's leading
yoga expert
MANISEKARAN

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Asana Of The Month

Uthita Lolasana

(Swinging While Standing Pose)

How To Do It:

1. Stand with legs wide apart. Balance your weight evenly on both soles.
2. Inhale, raise both arms straight above the head.
3. Exhale, drop the trunk downwards, bending from the hips, allowing the hands to swing through the legs with head lowered.
4. Inhale, raise the trunk back up right.
5. Repeat 5 rounds from Step 1.

Benefits:

An excellent pre-pranayama practice as it opens up all the alveoli and rebalances the ventilation-perfusion matching in the lungs.

It helps remove tiredness by stimulating the circulation and toning the spinal nerves.

It also speeds up lymphatic flow in the major ducts and improves drainage, especially from the abdomen and the base of the lungs.

Modification

Those who suffer from vertigo, high blood pressure or back pain should practice with proper guidance.





Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Orange Butter Cake (Eggless)

*2 cups self raising flour
120 grams butter
1 ½ cups evaporated milk
½ cup fresh orange juice
¾ cup castor sugar
1 tablespoon grated orange rind*

Method

1. Beat butter and sugar till fluffy.
2. Add in milk and beat till creamy. Next add in orange juice.
3. Then add orange rind and self-raising flour, mix well.
4. Pour mixture into a greased pan.
5. Bake in a preheated oven for about 30 minutes at a temperature of 350°F / 190°C

EVENTS

Astro Health & Safety Week

MAYI conducted a series of yoga talks and practical sessions on Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques (SMART), Correct Breathing, Natural Slimming & Rejuvenation (NSR) and Concentration & Memory Enhancement at Astro, Bukit Jalil head quarters on 26th & 27th October 2009 during their Annual Health and Safety week. This event was organised for the three thousand something employees of the media company. The participants brimmed with enthusiasm as they joined MAYI instructors for some "joints- cracking" relaxing stretches and many light moments were exchanged during the talks as participants threw their questions and comments to the floor. The lively groups left with a new awareness that yoga can enhance their lives through many practical and useful ways.

MAYI information booths were also set up here as well as annexe locations at Sri Kembangan and Petaling Jaya for the week long event.



Miss Malaysia Indian Global (MMIG) pageant

On 9th October 2009, the Miss Malaysia Indian Global (MMIG) pageant finals reached its climax with the crowning of Ms Ishvar Kaur Godrei as this year's Queen. Prior to the gala evening, a team of yoga teachers from Malaysian Association of Yoga Instructors (MAYI) were invited to guide the 16 finalists through a series of yoga sessions with the aim of helping them to release tensions and manage stress as they continued their intense training towards the finals. The sessions were well received, often concluding with the lovely young ladies approaching the MAYI teachers for more useful yoga tips.

While drawing Indian descent participants of various backgrounds from all corners of Malaysia, the MMIG pageant focuses less on beauty and physique. Instead, the personal and professional enhancement of these young ladies is more emphasised through its Health & Fitness events, Community and Environment Awareness Programme and a Bridging Communities Programme.

Congratulations to all the finalists of MMIG pageant!





A Slender New Me

Interview with Fion



I first came across a flyer of Natural Slimming & Rejuvenation (NSR) programme displayed outside The Yoga Franchise centre in Damansara Utama. Initially my colleague was excited and wanted to find out more about the course. But in the end, I was the one who signed up for this slimming programme. I had tried a lot of ways to slim down before yet failed to see results, and was hoping I had come to the right place. I also suffered from constipation and hoped that the programme would help to improve my health. I had no expectations of what the outcome would be, I was just trying my luck.

I remember the first time I entered this yoga centre; I felt very comfortable and peaceful. Actually at that time, there were a lot of things bothering me, so much so that I could not focus on my work. But when I stepped into this centre, instantly I felt calmness. I do not know how else to describe my feeling. For that moment, it made me forget about my problems.

In the first few weeks of the slimming class, I found that my body was very stiff and I couldn't even bend my body down when we were doing the forward bending pose. The amazing thing is,

after a few weeks of practice I felt my body become more flexible. Now, I really enjoy doing yoga poses. I feel good after my practice. In this slimming program, we practise cleansing methods to eliminate the toxins in our body; I like especially the laghoo and kunjai practices. I remember the first time I tried kunjai; instantly I felt fresh. Laghoo also helped me a lot in dealing with my constipation problem.

After 4 months into this slimming course, my appetite changed. I do not feel hungry easily anymore and only eat when I need to. I realized I had slimmed down a little. Frankly, I love to eat, so I never had any intention of controlling my food. But these days I choose to eat less oily and sweet foods. Perhaps I've learned to eat more consciously. I do not like to eat the oily dishes that were my favourite anymore. I feel satisfied just to enjoy it occasionally.

I practice yoga postures daily. After the practice of asana, I feel fresh, flexible and energetic. I have become more active and recently I even went hiking with my friends. Surprisingly, I did not have much muscle pain after hiking. Previously my whole body ached after only a mild hike.

With the regular slimming class, I can feel some changes in me like I have become calmer and give myself time to think before making decisions or taking any actions. I don't know how it happened. It was all very natural and I just feel motivated to do the yoga practices every day. 6 months after this programme, I realized I can do a lot more now compared to the past.

I would like to share my experience with those who wish to lose weight that yoga practice does work! I know, because I feel and see the result. My dress size used to be 'L' or 'XL', trouser size was 30 to 31 inches. Now 'M' size fits me and sometimes 'S', trouser size is now reduced to 29 inches (and is still a bit loose).



Fits before joining Yoga Slimming Class

My family and friends can see the changes in my body shape.

For Natural, Slimming and Rejuvenation class, we practise in a group and I like the idea of group practice. We are able to share and motivate each other to work towards our ideal body. I have become happier and know how to stay relaxed and calm even when handling some problems. I believe and am confident that I will stay fit and slim with the continued practice of yoga. YM

Prana Vidya

A knowledge to be reckoned with

The concept of prana or life force is always an interesting topic for those trying to understand psychic phenomenon especially yoga enthusiasts, healers or aspiring healers, those who believe in personal magnetism, hypnotists who believe in the theory of "Mesmer" (modern hypnotism doesn't believe that it's possible to bring any person under one's will through enhancing personal power or prana, but one can. And this is the reason that it is reduced to the level of hypnotherapy – merely a counseling process), and those seeking super powers or siddhis.

The "rishis", (the ancient seers of India), clearly understood prana (life force), how it works and how it helps physiological functioning. They knew that prana can be harnessed and utilized completely for the development of higher power, generate unlimited inner power, increase healing power, to awaken higher consciousness, for personal magnetism and develop charisma. This knowledge is known as Prana Vidya.

Prana Vidya (knowledge of prana) is not a mere rhetoric and lecture series. It is a science of defined techniques; which comprises techniques that begin with the preparatory practices, which progresses on to intermediate techniques and finally advanced Prana Vidya technology. It involves an amazing array of yoga dharanas (advanced mind training), that can bring about a total revolutionary state of mind and body. This revolution refers to a complete mental-physiological rejuvenation, enhancement and advancement.



Everyone desires unlimited energy to work faster, perform better, think sharper, be more creative, heal faster, look better and most of all, be a winner in life. Prana Vidya is the answer to all these and more! Prana Vidya is a highly advanced eastern technology incomprehensible to rigid minds which are ingrained by modern western science, because there is no so called scientific evidence documented to date. Closely guarded for centuries, this secret knowledge has only been kept alive, passed down from teacher to disciple. Even the novice can feel the freshness or surges of energy from the very start or sometimes experience the sight of sparkling golden prana, dispelling any preconceived notions of blind faith as a prerequisite. And through self practice further amazements can be revealed. So brace yourselves as this course will be launched in 2010. **YM**

PRANA & PRANAYAMA

- Life force & science of breathing

Prana is the vital energy found in all forms of life from mineral to man. The whole body is controlled and regulated by prana. Its workings is seen in the systolic (resting) and diastolic actions of the heart, when it pumps blood, during the digestion of food, the excretion of urine and faecal matter, the manufacture of semen, chyle, digestive juices, bile and saliva, the closing and opening of eyelids, in walking, running, talking, thinking, reasoning, feeling, etc.

Prana is in the air, but it is neither oxygen nor any of its chemical constituents. It is in food, water and in sunlight, yet it is not vitamins, heat or light rays. Food and water are only the medium through which prana is carried. We absorb prana through the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. It is prana that manifests itself as gravitation, electricity, lightning, wind etc.

The knowledge and control of prana is called pranayama which is one of the most important practices in all forms of yoga. By practicing pranayama, the yoga practitioner is able to control the nervous system and thereby gain gradual control over prana and the mind.

To breathe means to live and to live means to breathe. Every living thing depends on breathing and the cessation of breathing is cessation of life itself. Just as oxygen is carried through the blood stream to all parts of the body, so is prana distributed to all parts of the nervous system. When one inhales, he is taking in prana and storing it in various nerve centers, especially in the solar plexus. The more prana one can take in, the more vitality he possesses.

Nowadays, there are numerous centers where correct breathing is being taught for physical



health. Even expecting mothers are taught specific types of breathing exercises (pranayama) for natural painless childbirth. Yogis declare that the correct habit of breathing will relieve people from diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, asthma, tuberculosis and more. In addition, through pranayama man's will power, self control, concentration and moral qualifications is increased.

Hatha yoga is the science of body and mind and it should be approached gently, never in a haphazard or careless manner. It is risky to try and learn by just following instructions from books or the internet. Therefore for a harmonious development you must have the guidance of a teacher with comprehensive knowledge of yoga and this includes the learning of pranayama. YM



Wouldn't it be Great to have a **Toned, Fit & Healthy Body**

... and have it for life?

Wouldn't it be even more wonderful
to have it through an
all natural and holistic approach ?

- Do you open your closet and see nothing to wear even though it is evidently full?
- You have tried many types of weight loss methods and still unable to keep your weight off?
- You take different kinds of supplements to keep your weight off and once you stop the weight is back again?
- You desperately want to lose weight but worry about the side effects of the slimming pills?

Join this **Natural, Slimming & Rejuvenation Program** now, you will be able to have a slender body and at the same time obtain optimum health. When we talk about weight loss, most people associate it with fat. Here, fat will not be the focus, but you! You will be the focus! So learn to discover yourself again with us.

The three main components in this program: nutrition, psychology and physiology will help you to achieve your weight loss goal.

This approach enables safe and effective weight loss. You learn to understand your own body through this wholesome and complete holistic approach.



This program works because I see and feel the results. I have dropped from dress size 32/34 to now 24/26. My life has changed, I feel light and confident. I am more calm like I can do a lot more than before. It just happened naturally. I also realize that my appetite has changed. I do not deprive myself from food at all and I realize now I only eat when I need to. I also had a great time with this great group of people. We listened strong bonds and provided positive support to each other throughout this course.

I really enjoyed this journey!

Fion

It actually works! My perception has changed from doubtful to "there's hope"! I feel that my body has become more toned and flexible. I like this program because it does not have a strict diet plan like in slimming centers, no machines and no supplements, it is all natural. Through this program, I adopted a positive self image too.

Lin



Program Modules

Simple and Effective Exercise and Breathing Techniques

Learn to work on certain parts of the body as you require. Enjoy 1.5 hours of undivided attention with our slimming expert every week for 12 weeks.

Self Massage Workshop

Discover the techniques to embrace your body. Take this opportunity to experience the pleasure of self massage and build a strong friendship with your body. Enjoy these proven techniques and massage yourself in the comfort of your own home.

Slimming Massage Therapy

Enjoy 4 sessions of slimming massage therapy with our therapist to rejuvenate your body and mind.

Effective Visualisation

Technique and tips will be provided to boost your mental strength to achieve your ideal weight.

Detoxification

Learn the natural respiratory, digestive and intestinal cleansing method.

Diet Recommendation and Lifestyle

Refine your habits and adopt positive practices through the knowledge you learn in the class.

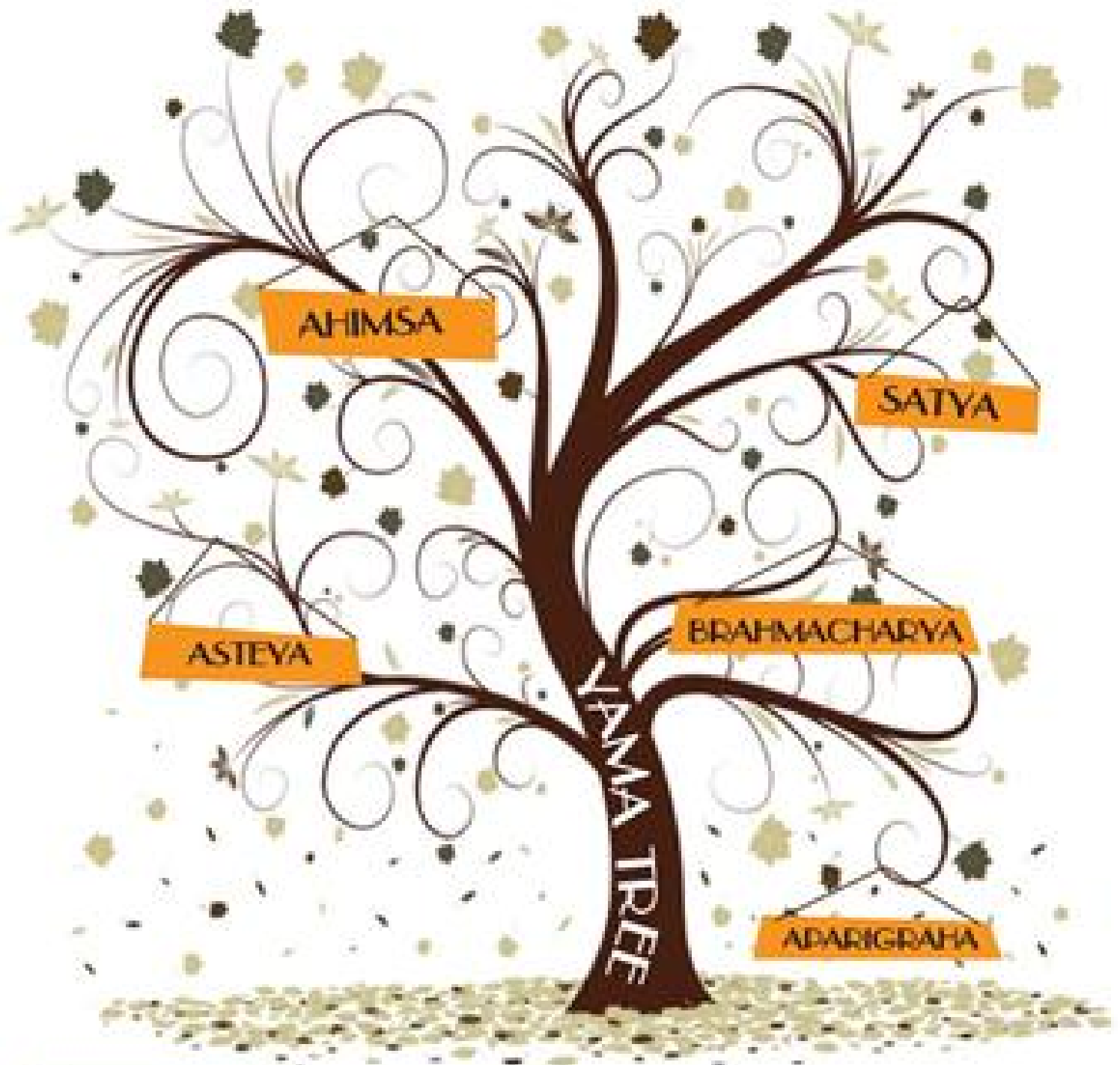
Dosha Discovery

Understand your body constitution, improve your health and maintain the weight you desire.

NSR Natural Slimming & Rejuvenation Centre
39A - 41A, Jalan SS21/60 Damamara Utama (Uptown) 47400 Selangor.
Tel : 03 - 77241072 Fax : 03-77241079 www.nsr.com.my

WELCOME

to SUPER YOGA KIDS corner



Do you know...

YOGA is not only about stretching and breathing. It consists of other aspects too. Yoga has eight limbs (branches). Let us begin with the 1st limb of yoga, Yama. Yama is a combination of 5 aspects of universal ethics. They are

AHIMSA, SATYA, ASTEYA, BRAHMACHARYA, APARIGRAHA

The Joy of Sharing

ASTEYA - SHARING

Rama never accepted expensive gifts from anyone. He was blessed with the wealth of contentment. He adjusted to every circumstance with a smile of contentment. He was never unhappy.

Once, King Asoka sent Rama some expensive utensils. Rama was not present in his cottage so his mother received them. When he came back, his mother told him that King Asoka had sent some very beautiful utensils. She also said that she had kept them in the cottage and distributed the old earthenware ones.

Rama said, "That is all right. Now we shall distribute the new utensils as well." And, carrying the basket of utensils on his head, he went out to distribute them. He was very happy after distributing them. The people of his village came to know that Rama had distributed all his utensils so they gave him new earthenwares.

The moral of the story is:

Whatever we have, belongs to everyone. How nice if everybody can use it! That was the way Rama thought.

Dear children, try to think like him and translate his thoughts into your behaviour and actions. Feel happy, like Rama, to find your things are being utilised by others. May you understand what the joy of sharing is!

More examples of sharing

1. Sometimes it's letting your little brother sleep in bed with you.
2. Sharing half your cookie with your friend - even if it's your favourite, chocolate chips.
3. Sharing is telling your dad and mum about your school trip to the petting zoo.
4. Your friend forgot to bring his pencil case, you may share some of your pencils with him.
5. When your classmate doesn't understand how to solve a math problem, you share with him the method to solve it.

Sharing makes others feel good, and it makes you feel good too.

Sharing is the giving of yourself to others. Sharing is a good thing to do!

Can you think of other ways to share?



Seeing Stars

Getting backstage to meet your favourite stars in their dressing room is not easy



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Price: RM3700.00 per pax
(standard twin sharing) Children Below 5 free*

Note:

1. The seat is reserved based on non-refundable deposit
2. The organizer reserves the right to amend the itinerary etc.

For more information, kindly contact:

Sumi : 012-2679621

Brickfield / Bangsar: 03-2260 5322

Damansara Uptown: 03-7726 6682



Super Yoga Kids

COMPETITION



Date: 5th June 2010

Age: 4 – 18 years old

Fees: RM10.00

Category A: 4 – 7 years old

Category B: 8 – 11 years old

Category C: 12 – 15 years old

Category D: 15 – 18 years old

All Are Welcome

*Register before 5th May 2010,
contact Sumi 012-267 9621*

Pregnancy Yoga

A harmonious passage to Motherhood with confidence

MAYI is offering a Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course in January. It endeavours to give you the fundamental skills to teach pregnancy yoga classes if you are already a yoga teacher. The course is relevant to midwives, doulas, pregnant women, yoga teachers, yoga practitioners who are preparing to get pregnant and any interested parties.

We also conduct weekly pregnancy yoga classes.

Please contact Dhanya at 03-22605322 or 016-6188029 for more details



W()ANDERING IN THE SOUTH

by Vijaya

Immediately after my amazing trip around Tamil Nadu, south of India, encountering one stunning temple after another, things became turbulent in neighbouring Sri Lanka.

The face of Tamil Nadu changed ... at least for a while. The mass protests, self-torching, riots and suicides that happened in support of those suffering in Sri Lanka were overwhelming to say the least. I watched in pain and awe as even very young students did their part by expressing their grief through plays, songs and poems.

That told me something about the people. They were very intense. Very simple, yet deep....

There was something about India that was captivating. Indian cities were accommodating and providing livelihood for millions. The first impulse was to see the obvious and complain: "... the infrastructure: backward; ... the people: uncivilized, unhygienic; ... living areas: poor, dirty, congested."

Perhaps it was just a different sight from the luxury and comfort we are drenched in at home.

So, I was not prepared for the gigantic structures that I encountered in the name of temples, feeling and experiencing the subtle spiritual vibrations that raced up my feet in the ancient splendour that was India.... the magical, magnificent, extremely beautiful temples in Tamil Nadu especially, and Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh.

These glorious stone structures have withstood many a war and many a troublesome period in the history of mankind, which have destroyed and put into oblivion some of the greatest empires, civilizations and languages that have ever existed.



They stand tall still as the remnants of ancient Indian civilizations like the empires of the Chola, Chera and Pandiya. The palaces that these kings would have set up to showcase their might and power exist no more, but the temples they envisioned are still standing to tell of the strange ways of existence was at that time, in another era.

The Madurai Moonakshi Amman temple astounded me and took me 3,600 years back to the empire of the Pandiyas. Tears welled up in my eyes as the guide charmed us back through the tunnel of time.

It was not just a structure. It held the best of history, it told interesting stories and has captured to this day the splendour of its past. And like many mystical temples and monuments in India it has guarded its secret well... with the care of a mother...

The very fact that it covers 45 acres and was worked on meticulously and with dedication by 64 generations of kings sent chills up my spine.

Makes one wonder what determination and spiritual will would have propelled the kings in these times. India is perhaps, now, a far cry from the splendour of its past, but there has to remain a link I suppose. Lots of people I admire have hailed from India, that much I know.



The Mahabalaswamy temple

Just consider the unprecedented achievements of Kamalahassan or A.R. Rahman of 'Slumdog Millionaire' fame. Or just give a moment of thought to some great figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore or the missile man Abdul Kalam. We continue to be bewildered by the extent of the impact this country has had on the whole of humanity through its beautiful and extraordinary children.

The epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, ancient temples, yoga, meditation techniques and spiritual achievements reveal how advanced the country must have been a few thousand years ago.

The temples are in fact a proof of this, and they serve their purpose well even to this day.

It was not easy to see the deities within or get the blessings of the priests because there were not only curious, and/or 'devoted' tourists performing prayers, but hundreds of locals present at all moments to get the first glimpse of their celebrated deities.

The pushing part was not pleasant though.

Crowds were present at every temple we visited, from the very huge, historically prominent Vaitheswaran temple, Rameswaram, Palani, Thiruthani and Pillayarpetti, right up to Kanyakumari down South and the world-famous Tirupati.

Tirumala tirupati temple



The fervour with which the Indians dedicated their lives to praying was unbelievable. The local papers were full of news of devotees and their feverish religious pursuits.

It was not just a prayer gathering, or mere worshipping anymore, but a phenomenon that seemed to boil out of the heart of India everywhere you turned... North, South, East and West.

God is everywhere, without and within. People can choose to shun all outward worship of God and go for the higher practice of seeking God through meditation and blending with the unmanifest part of the universe. But what is manifest is also God. In Tamil there's a saying that means 'if you see only the stone, you won't realise what it represents and if you realise what it represents, you won't be able to see the stone.'

In Swami Nithyananda's words, 'we don't worship the idols, but we worship through the idols'.

Something to think about.

Talking about form, there's the mesmeric and glowing red mountain deemed to be Lord Shiva himself, by the great sage Ramana Maharshi, at Thiruvannamalai. I did the 'girivalam' —

literally meaning walking around the mountain, and spiritually meaning a myriad of things ... depending on what we see.

My camera unwittingly saw more than I did.

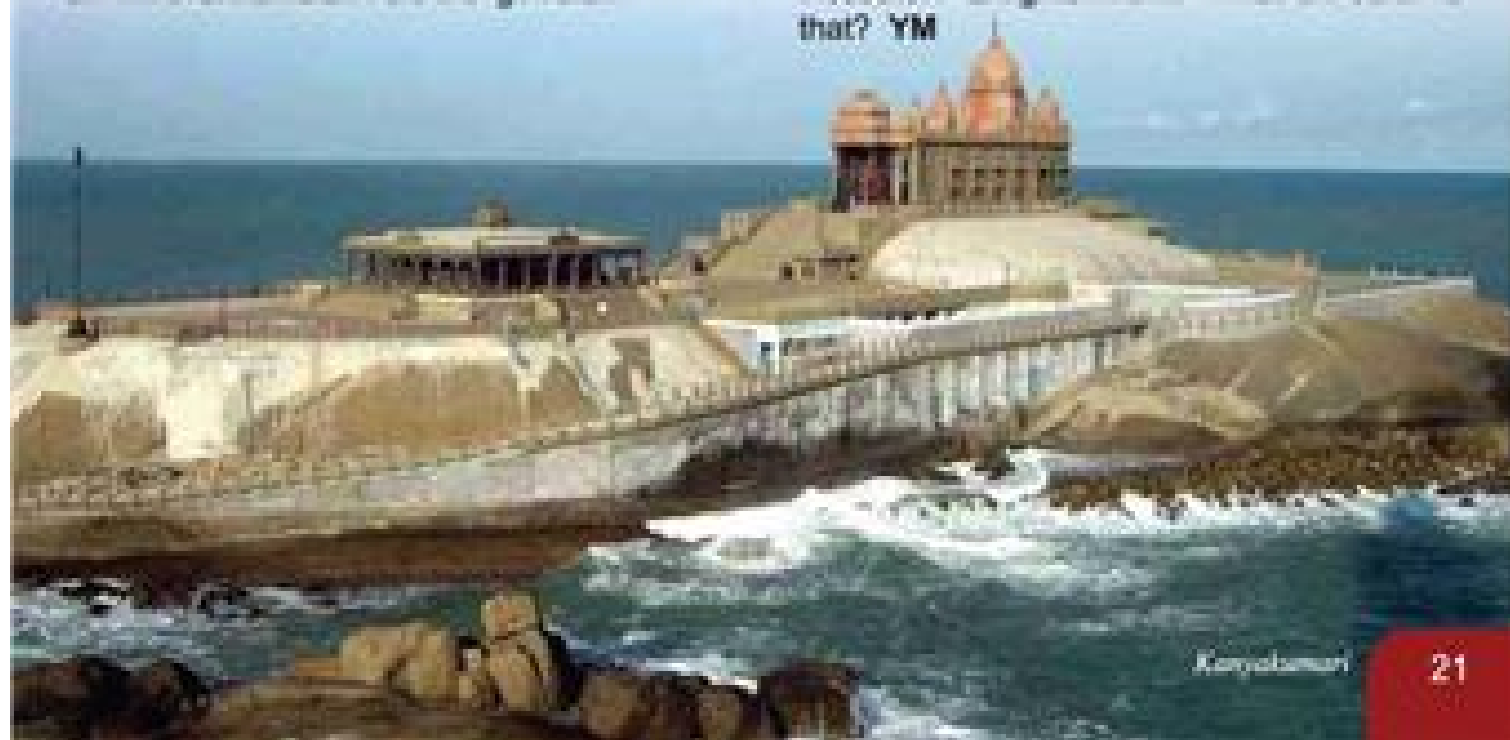
It was Paul Brunton, a westerner, who probably is responsible for the millions of visitors annually at the 'red mountain', including me. But the mountain itself was enchanting and had a magnetic force of its own.

This reminded me of the Himalayas and its strange pull.

Now, what is it about these mountains? Swami Nithyananda calls it a spiritual incubator. Whatever it is, I felt really, truly blessed to be there!

I have to count myself very lucky for even being able to set foot in places like Kanyakumari, where the saint Vivekananda meditated and attained enlightenment.

These are words held with great care in this country where people swarm around the temples like ants around sugar and bees around flowers. When you've been here, you're inclined to ask what is it the bright, mesmerizing eyes of the people hold? Spiritual incubator? Enlightenment? What on earth is that? YM





Frog

by Enbarani Ramasamy

Once upon a time, it could have happened here, it could have happened there, it could have happened anywhere. There lived two frogs in the remote virgin rainforest of Malaysia. One was the Waterfall Frog and the other called the Forest Frog.

Waterfall Frog lived between cascades of rocks that formed a renowned waterfall, spending most of the time relaxing on the cool and mossy stones.

Forest Frog stayed with his wife and son, on the top of the lowest tree branches and shrubs. Sometimes hiding deep under the muddy earth where it was cooler and safer, covering his family with wet leaves after the monsoon shower.

Both frogs originated from the same species and lived close to each other, but they rarely interact as how good neighbours should. Forest Frog, Forest Frog, think you can beat me to the top of the waterfall starting from the bottom here?" Waterfall frog would challenge his neighbor to fight the roaring currents along the terrain of the rocky hill.

"Waterfall Frog, Waterfall Frog, dare to jump until the last tip of leaf on this dwarf foliage?"

Meanwhile, Forest Frog would summon Waterfall Frog to leap as high as possible from the ground.

The forest came alive with the competitive croaks bouncing from one corner to the other. Arguments arose, feet swung across the sky and belching monstrous frog-voices echoed throughout the space, waking up all the inhabitants.

Today, sunset arrived like all the other dusks in the past. Waterfall Frog invited Forest Frog into a fight like all the other evenings. All other dwellers in the forest were wide awake. And this time Slithery Snake, who usually lay dormant in a cave not far away was very much alert, his muscular slippery body springing locally at one spot as the frogs leaped frantically, one trying to beat the other.

Waterfall Frog had seen the hungry serpent long before Forest Frog did. Without thinking any longer, Waterfall Frog slowly edged to the rock nearest to Slithery Snake and pushed Forest Frog into the rushing water. Forest Frog toppled backwards where Slithery Snake immediately swung his body and gobbled up Forest Frog in a wink.

Waterfall Frog leaped all the way back home claiming to be the only powerful frog while Mrs. Forest Frog and Forest Frog Junior locked themselves in a muddy hole, mourning over the demise of Forest Frog as silence fell in the dark jungle.

Many more gloomy nights clouded Forest Frog's muddy house. Both mum and son meditated patiently in the frog posture for the benefit of Forest Frog's soul. One day, Forest Frog Junior walked out of his house, strolling under the heavy downpour, careful enough not to sing any song despite his instinctive urge for a staccato after the shower.

A few metres away from where he stood, Forest Frog saw the magnificent Slithery Snake trying to attack and swallow the familiar silhouette, his father's murderer.

"Oh Forest Frog Junior, please help me, son. I don't want to be Slithery Snake's dinner. Help me, help me!" pleaded Waterfall Frog.

Forest Frog Junior remembered the time his father was pushed by this evil amphibian, his very same kind. Somehow, he remembered his father's legacy of wisdom more.

"To err is human, to forgive is divine! Never seek revenge or keep a grudge, for the negative energy will envelope you and turn you to the person you are not meant to be. Be kind even to your greatest enemy."

Using his kicking skills, Forest Frog Junior conjured up enough energy and kicked hard a rock just beside his web foot towards Slithery Snake. The stone struck the snake's head, causing it to slide away into the jungle in less than a second.

"Please forgive me for causing the death of your father, Forest Frog Junior. What a snobbish and cruel frog I was in the past!" Waterfall Frog's eyes moistened as he knelt in front of Forest Frog Junior, bending furiously to and fro regretting the evil deed he committed a long time ago, and thankful for the lease of life given to him.

"Waterfall Frog, though I am mad at the person who made me into an orphan, I do not seek revenge for my father. He would never want me to keep the bitter feeling inside me," said Forest Frog Junior. "You are not my enemy, nor are you my friend. Farewell, Waterfall Frog!"

Forest Frog Junior continued his walk in the new coolness of the forest, breathing in the solitary and calmness of the greenery.



The above is an original story sparked from the author's subconscious whilst meditating near Kanching Waterfall in Rawang, Selangor. A body of a lifeless frog pressed underneath wet brown leaves was the main catalyst of this inspiring tale on forgiveness.

Forgiving is a divine and ancient art practised by the noble souls of past and present. It is uplifting, refreshing and perspective giving. Let go of the bile poisoning our true self and make this act one of the many resolutions we plan to execute this New Year. It is easier to fill a vessel with more goodness when it is empty. Rubbish and unnecessary treasure will only dampen the spirit and sink one's soul.

To kick off this wonderful act of forgiveness in the year 2010, add yoga practice into our lifestyles and turn it into a discipline that will force us to identify and acknowledge our restrictions and teach us to be happy inward by forgiving the sins and mistakes of others and also ourselves. YM

Reflection on Yoga practice: Finding spaces

By Ling Yeoh

<http://passionliving.ning.com/>

Imagine your mind as a lake. When something happened, such as a loved one stood you up, a ripple is created and spread across the surface of the lake, a wave of emotion – a sense of irritability and disappointment swept over you. Soon, the lake regains its calmness. However, the wave also charged downwards, and shifted the sand on the bottom of the lake, which represents your subconscious mind. Over time, repetitions of similar events triggered similar consequential effects; soon, a sand mount is formed - this little sand mount is called "I'm not good enough" or maybe, "I'm not lovable"... We have plenty of sand mounts on the bottom of our lakes. Our pain bodies.

During our yoga practice, Nikki, our teacher asked us to "observe" instead of "think" or "analyse"... Just observe the sand mounts and the waves. And don't forget to breathe, where's your breath? Find your breath... I can still hear her soft encouraging voice echoing in the back of my mind.

Such simple metaphor, and such simple response: observe, and breathe.

Instead of fighting or resisting, accept it and focus on creating "positive" sand mount, of loving and kindness.

Another way of looking at how our mind and body works is to imagine that all events in our lives, actions, in-action, words, thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc, leaves an "imprint" or "marking" on our physical body, at different points and spots. For instance, I carry my grief (of my father's passing) beneath my right shoulder blade. And someone may carry an unfulfilled dream just under his right rib cage.

Practicing yoga allows one to explore all parts of one's body and to recognise these spots. Some spots are buried and hidden deep within, between folds of muscles and layers of tissues. By stretching, we rediscover these spaces and find our forgotten selves.

"Charge your arms forward... what's stopping you? Don't confront or resist. Observe and breathe, ask yourself, what do you have to let go in order to surrender, find your breath..."

What do I have to let go? Each time I asked this question, I could sense a gentle stirring at the bottom of the lake. Breathe, and I find spaces within, and beyond.

By letting go, I surrender. By surrendering, I find freedom. YM

YOGIC SCRIPTURE

HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA
Chapter 2, Verse 2.

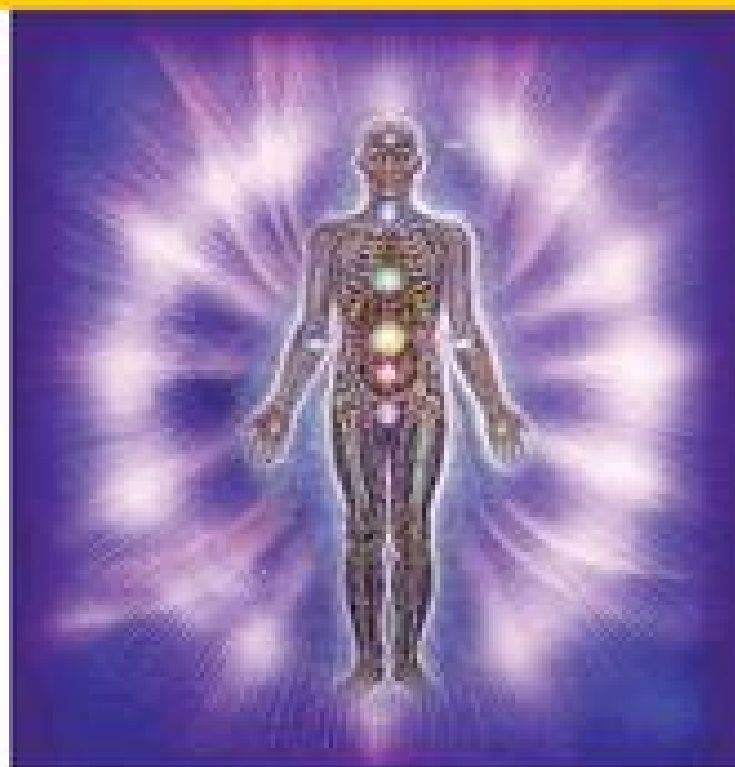
When prana moves, chitta (the mental force) moves. When prana is without movements, chitta is without movement. By this (steadiness of prana) the yogi attains steadiness and should thus restrain the vayu/prana.

Prana and mind are intricately linked. Fluctuations of one means fluctuations of the other. When either the mind or prana becomes balanced the other is steadied. Hatha yoga says, control the prana and the mind is automatically controlled, whereas raja yoga says, control the mind and prana becomes controlled. These are two paths of yoga.

The mind is equated with a wild monkey, jumping here and there. Because of this inborn tendency it is very difficult to hold it still. Hatha yoga says let the mind be, concentrate on the autonomic body functions and vital energy, and the mind will become quiet by itself. When the nervous impulses are steady and rhythmic, the brain functions are regulated and the brain waves become rhythmic.

The breathing process is directly connected to the brain and central nervous system and it is one of the most vital processes in the body system. It also has some connection with the hypothalamus, the brain centre which controls emotional responses. The hypothalamus is responsible for transforming perception into cognitive experience. Erratic breathing sends erratic impulses to this centre and thus creates disturbed responses.

There are also certain areas of the nasal mucous membrane which are connected to the visceral organs. When impulses coming from the nose are arrhythmic, the visceral organs, particularly those connected to the coccygeal plexus, respond in the same manner, arrhythmically. Being disturbed, these organs again send irregular impulses to the brain and cause more disharmony and imbalance. This cycle is continuous.



By becoming aware of the nature of the breath and by restraining it, the whole system becomes controlled. When you retain the breath you are stopping nervous impulses in different parts of the body and harmonizing the brain wave patterns. In pranayama, it is the duration of breath retention which has to be increased. The longer the breath is held, the greater the gap between nervous impulses and their responses in the brain. When retention is held for a prolonged period, mental agitation is curtailed.

It has been found that through pranayama, mudras, bandhas and certain postures which regulates the prana, the mind can be brought under control. In many practices and traditions, it was discovered that by concentrating on the breath, one can still the mind, develop one-pointedness and gain entry into the deeper realms of the mind and consciousness. **YM**

NATURE'S TRAIL

An Ocean full of... **RUBBISH!**

By Serina Rahman

When you stand at a beach and look out at the endless blue horizon, have you ever realized that every tiny drain, stream or river eventually ends up in the sea and ocean? All that water before you has parts of all the water that comes from land... and everything that floats within it.

In fact, if we were gifted with supersonic eyesight, we would be able to see that the vast blue waters are not just blue. They are actually dotted with bits of white and pink and red and every other colour of the rainbow.

These are not the colours of fish or other marine animals. Sadly, these are the colours of man-made things. The seas and oceans are chock-full of rubbish that has floated down from land via drains, streams and rivers and most of it will continue to float there for a long time.

In 1964, Captain Charles Moore founded the Algalita Marine Research Foundation and built his first ocean research vessel, the Algalita. On a return trip from Hawaii to his home in Long Beach, California in 1969, he decided to try a route rarely used by other vessels and stumbled upon a floating mass of rubbish that stretched out for miles.

"In the week it took to cross the subtropical high, no matter what time of day I looked, plastic

debris was floating everywhere: bottles, bottle caps, wrappers, fragments..." he later related. "It's not a patch, it's the size of a continent and it's filling up with floating plastic waste."

Unfortunately, today, about 10 years later, this large loose patch of floating rubbish still remains in the middle of the huge Pacific Ocean – the biggest stretch of water on our entire planet. And because of ocean currents, this floating mass of synthetic waste is constantly moving, changing shape and getting bigger as it feeds on a constant stream of rubbish that floats towards it on the ocean's four major currents.

Where all the currents meet, there is a giant eddy – or area of relative calm – somewhat like the quietly circulating eye of a tornado. This is the called the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre and this is where all the rubbish settles. Some of it floated off land decades before it reached the gyre. But once it gets there, it is trapped, as it is unable to cross the currents that sent it there.

When this mass of rubbish was first detected, it was said to be the size of Texas. Today it is said to be much bigger, and various studies have shown that there might be two such patches in the Pacific Ocean. No one is really sure how much rubbish is out there.



There are many scary things to be aware of when we think about this huge mass of waste.

1. Researchers at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) have found that up to 70% of the marine debris that enters the sea ends up on the seabed. This means that the huge floating patch of rubbish that can be seen at the surface is only 30% of the rubbish that exists in our oceans.

2. Floating rubbish is a danger to vessels at sea. A research boat from the Algalita Marine Research Foundation found what looked like a floating door. They tried to lift it only to discover that it was actually the top end of a 20-foot container, floating vertically in the water. When they returned with a larger vessel to retrieve it, it had disappeared and no one knows to this day where it might be floating mid-water, a hazard to unknowing boats passing through the area.

3. Floating rubbish gets eaten by marine animals who mistake it for food. According to the Ocean Conservancy's 2009 International Coastal Cleanup Report, scientists recently found a dead sperm whale that had 440 pounds of fishing gear in its stomach. A study of seabirds on Dutch beaches found that 98% of them had plastic in their stomachs.

Infinite numbers of seabirds in remote Pacific Islands have been found dead with their stomachs full of plastic debris. Even more horrifying is that these animals feed their young

with the plastic bits that they find, mistaking them for food and thereby killing off their offspring.

4. Marine animals also get entangled in marine debris – either killing them because they are unable to surface for air (in the case of mammals or reptiles such as dolphins and turtles) or limiting their ability to move and find food. Volunteers in the annual International Coastal Cleanup often find birds with fishing lines entangled on their legs, and seals with cans clamping their mouths shut. Many animals die needlessly this way.

The most dangerous examples of marine debris are the kilometres of abandoned fishing lines and trawling nets that float in the oceans. These ghost nets entrap a myriad of fish, marine mammals, reptiles and even birds as they waft through the seas, never to be retrieved.

5. Man-made rubbish leaches chemicals and poisons into the sea as a result of prolonged exposure to the sun and waves. Rubbish floating endlessly within the gyre eventually breaks down into tiny fragments. These fragments behave like sponges that absorb harmful chemicals in concentrations a million times greater than normal.



6. These chemically-laden plastic fragments are often sucked up by salps and jellies that populate the gyre. These gelatinous animals are then eaten by fish, which are then eaten by other fish. By the time man catches and consumes these fish – they would have many multiples of poisonous content within them.

These poisons are known to cause liver and thyroid toxicity, reproductive problems, memory loss, declines in fertility, breast and prostate cancer as well as result in endocrine imbalances. Studies have shown that these poisons cause the delicately balanced set of hormones and glands to behave abnormally, affecting virtually every organ and cell by mimicking the female hormone estrogen. In marine environments, scientists have found that excess estrogen has led to Twilight Zone-esque discoveries of male fish and seagulls that have sprouted female sex organs. Scientists are still testing whether these poisons, once consumed by humans, could have the same results.

So what can you do?

For a start, ensure that your rubbish is placed securely in rubbish bins and sent for proper waste processing. Drains are not rubbish receptacles. Many years of research have shown that the largest source of marine debris is from land. Wind and rain can carry rubbish from even the barest deserts and the highest mountains into a drain or stream and then it will all eventually end up in our seas.



Reducing your consumption of plastic products is the next logical thing to do. 90% of marine debris is made of plastic. Captain Charles Moore believes that "plastic is like diamonds – it lasts forever". A glass bottle takes 1 million years to break down in the environment. An aluminium can takes 80-200 years. A plastic bag (even if it claims to be 'environmentally degradable') will take 10-20 years to degrade, but unlike glass or aluminium, will never break down into any natural form. Instead, it will disintegrate into tiny fragments and continue to float in the sea accumulating chemicals that will be consumed by marine animals and which will eventually poison humans.

When at the beach, pick up the rubbish that you see around you and tell everyone you know about the consequences of carelessly leaving rubbish in the wrong places. It's easy to make a difference. You just have to be careful. YM



Food For Thought

Healthy habits bring you a healthy body by Sun Lim

The most important things always are very simple. Sometimes because they are too simple, we tend to ignore them. Here are some simple tips for those who want to become healthier or are starting to step into the world of vegetarianism.

If you can follow them closely, I am sure that you will experience some improvements in your health. But these are only suggestions and are not intended to replace the treatment from any health care professional and/or medical doctor. The reader should take full responsibility when using this information. The tips below only relate to diet and body parts. I will share the information about what to do with the "mind" in the next issue of Yogamail.

1. EAT NATURAL, PURE AND FRESH FOOD, PREFERABLY GRAINS, NUTS, VEGETABLES AND FRUITS:

- To avoid disrupting our metabolism, it is better to reduce the intake of animal protein (including meat, eggs and cow's milk) step by step rather than becoming a vegan within a day. For example, start by avoiding all kinds of red meat, only take white meat. After three months, try to avoid all kinds of meat and seafood; only take eggs and cow's milk. After 6 months avoid all kinds of animal protein.
- If eating animal protein, the constituent of vegetables should be three times as much as meat. Only take white meat like steamed fish, and only during lunchtime.
- Avoid canned foods, pickled products, "imitation meat", MSG, preservatives and products containing artificial food colouring.
- Avoid tobacco (including second hand smoke), alcohol and caffeinated beverages and foods.
- Avoid spicy, deep-fried or grilled foods. Replace with steamed, boiled or stewed foods.

- Avoid the "Four Whites": white rice, refined bleached white sugar, salt and white flour. Substitute with brown rice, brown sugar and whole-wheat flour.
- Four Low, One High: low protein, low fat (use cold-pressed olive oil, grapeseed oil, sunflower oil, flaxseed oil etc.), low sugar, low salt, high fibre.
- At least five colours of vegetables, grains and cereals per meal.

2. HEALTHY EATING HABITS BRING A HEALTHY BODY AND MIND.

- Try to separate proteins and starches. Food combination: more components of the protein plus a smaller amount of starches or more components of the starches plus a smaller amount of protein.
- Have fruits 30 minutes before meals or 2 hours after meals.
- Have beverages 30 minutes before meals. Do not drink anything during your meal.
- Have small, frequent meals. Have a hearty breakfast, heavier lunch and light dinner.
- Miss meals if in pain, emotionally upset, not hungry, feeling chilled and during sickness.
- Avoid hot temperature foods and beverages.
- Drink at least 8 cups of plain water per day. Drink slowly.
- Chew slowly; chew each mouthful of food at least 30 times.
- After meals, take a 5 to 15-minute walk.





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Jaime Spatafore



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11/1/2010	Natural Slimming & Rejuvenation
12-15/1/2010	Self Mastery <i>(Intensive)</i>
14/1/2010	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
17,24,31/1/2010	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
30/1/2010	Full Shankaprakshalana <i>(Internal Detoxification)</i>

FEBRUARY

27/2/2010	Self Massage Workshop
28/2/2010	Manipuraka Workshop
28/2/2010	Urdhva Retas Workshop

MARCH

5/3/2010	Yoga Sadhana Course
6/3/2010	Yoga Sadhana Course <i>(Teens)</i>
7,21/3/2010	Pranayama Instructor Course
8/3/2010	International Yoga Instructor Course Level 1 <i>(Part time)</i>
8-11/3/2010	Prana Vidya
12/3/2010	International Yoga Instructor Course Level 1 <i>(Part time)</i>
13/3/2010	International Yoga Instructor Course Level 1 <i>(Residential)</i>
14/3/2010	Pregnancy Workshop
14/3/2010	Super Yoga Kids Competition
15-19/3/2010	Self Mastery <i>(Intensive)</i>
15,16/3/2010	Young Masters Programme <i>(Age groups: Preschool, Primary, Teens)</i>
20/3/2010	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course Level 1 <i>(Semi Intensive)</i>
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