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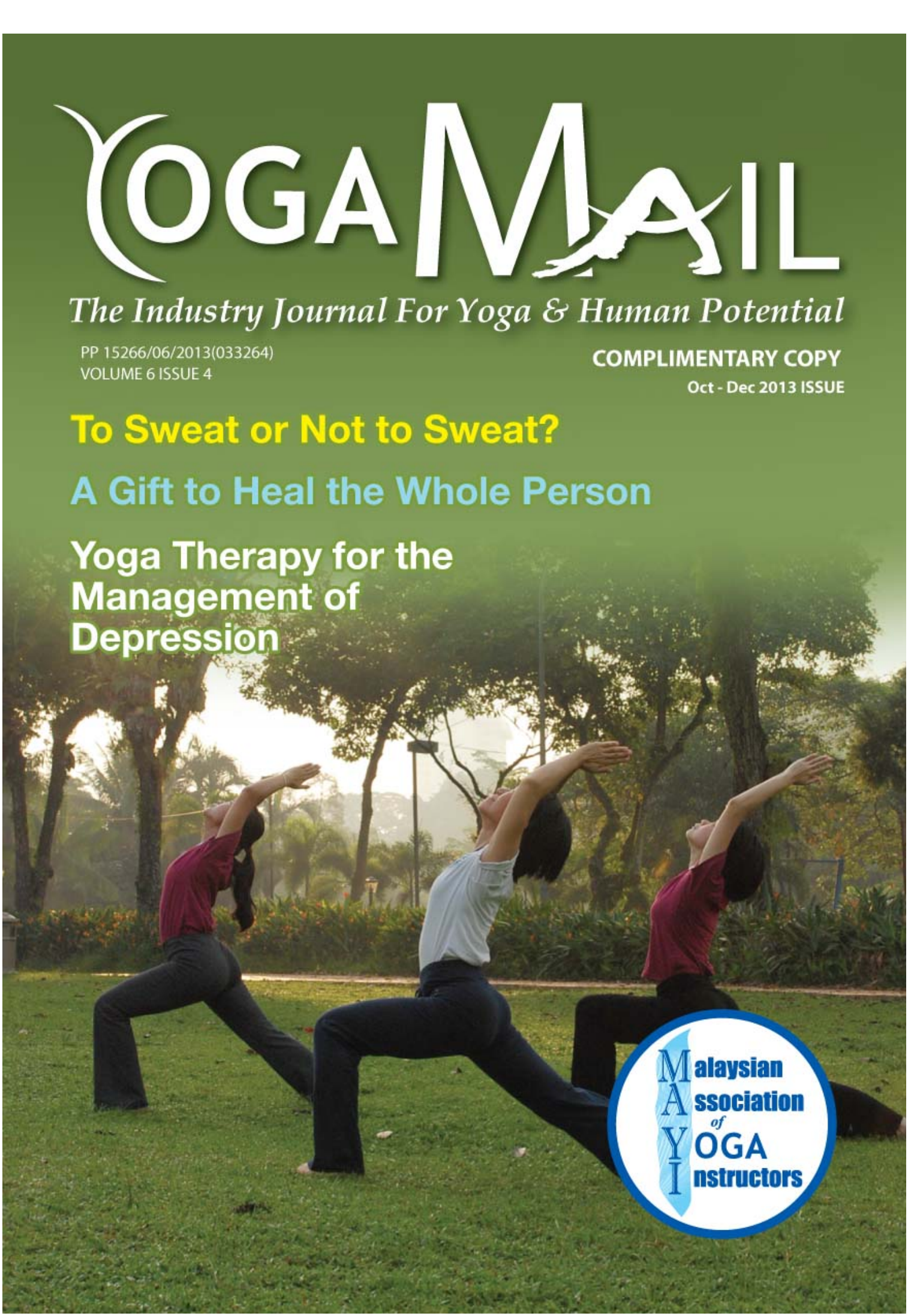
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Oct - Dec 2013 ISSUE

To Sweat or Not to Sweat?

A Gift to Heal the Whole Person

Yoga Therapy for the Management of Depression



Message from Master Mani

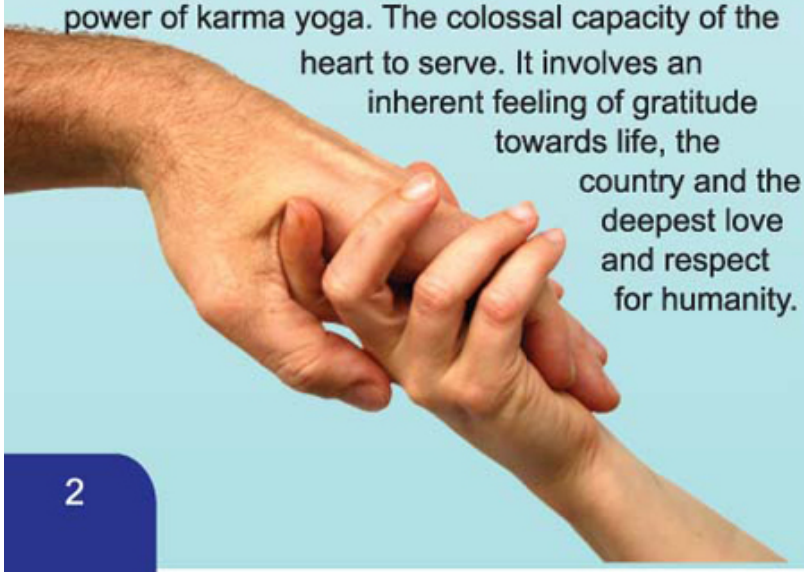
The real art of serving: Generosity or karma yoga?

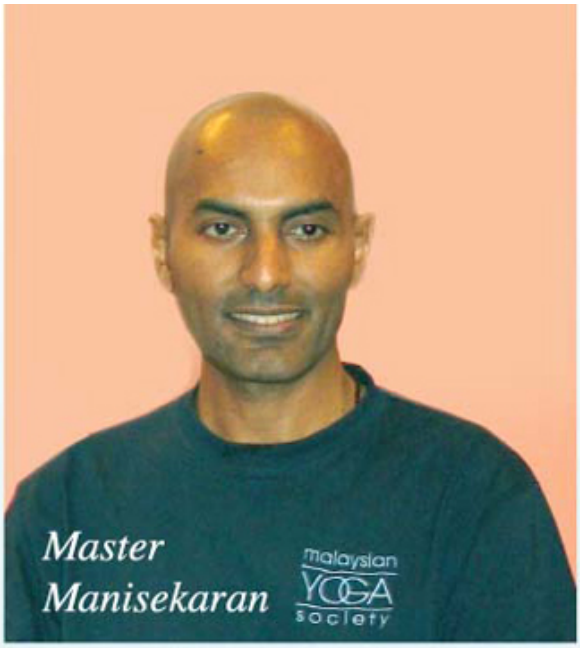
It has always confounded the civilised world how someone like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi — with no distinctive features, seemingly insipid, wielding no apparent political power or wealth — could have instigated millions through his sheer willfulness, assertiveness, wisdom, clarity and unshakable confidence. His legacy shines on and continues to inspire millions throughout the world.

Indians revere him as a Mahatma, or a great soul. What was the element different in him? How was he able to influence over 500 million people in India?

The answer lies in how Gandhi lived and what he lived for — with gratitude in his heart and truth in his being. His determined drive to uphold truth made him fearless and gave him the unflinching courage to place himself as a shield against not only the British ruler's power and arrogance but also against life's trials. In the midst of great political upheavals, he stood firmly by 'Satyagraha', or truth-force: 'A weapon of the strongest, which excludes the use of violence in any shape or form'.

When Gandhi stepped forward to the frontline, the peasants, like did the greatest minds of India (and also outside of India), lined up firmly behind his frail frame. Together they formed a mighty force of pure love and civil resistance based on truth. This is the power of karma yoga. The colossal capacity of the heart to serve. It involves an inherent feeling of gratitude towards life, the country and the deepest love and respect for humanity.





Acts of generosity come nowhere close to the real meaning of Karma Yoga. A generous heart is ever giving, but the real and actual attitude in serving is the feeling of innate and ingrained gratitude for everything there is. So deep that even an enemy becomes precious in one's eyes. In this state, the opportunity to serve needs to severe ties motivated by race, religion, nationality, gender, creed or colour. It has to not consider or calculate any factor at all. When a call to serve comes in any magnitude, one will plunge in readily with the feeling of gratitude, that is all there is to do.

How many get this opportunity? How well do we understand the call of karma yoga? It is a state that can only happen right in the depth of your heart — in the heart of all hearts!

I take this opportunity to salute all the peaceful warriors of karma yoga who move silently incognito amongst us. These men and women deserve the highest appreciation from the entire humanity for they are the true lovers of humanity. **YM**

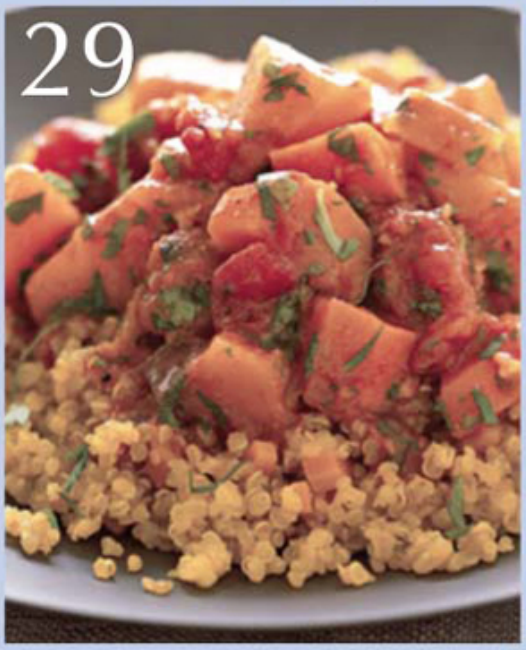
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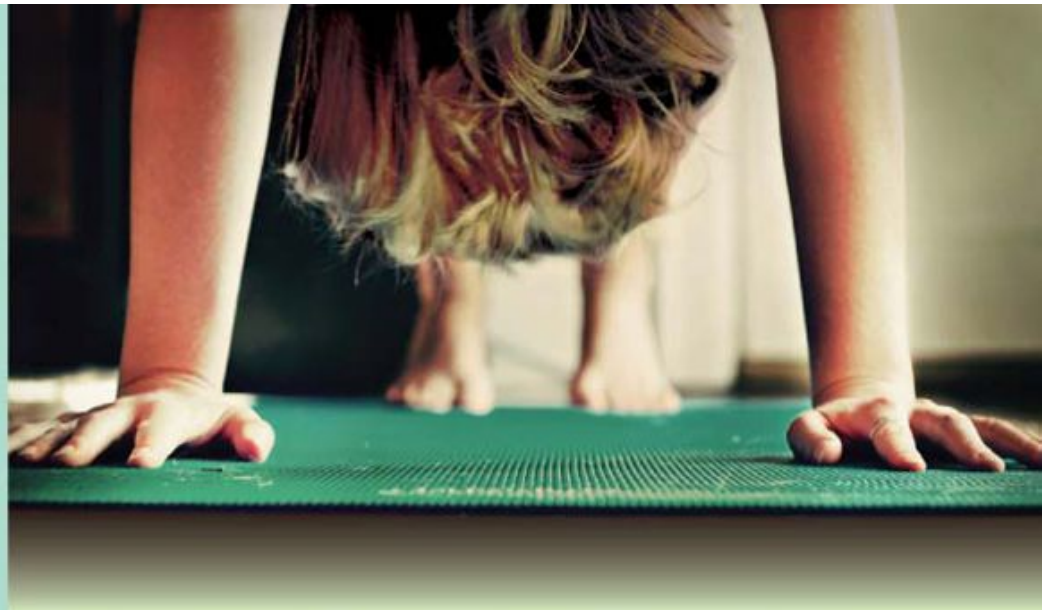
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The Other 80 percent:
Looking Deeper into Karma and Yoga

by Vijaya

Therefore without attachment perform ever the work that is to be done (for the sake of the world); for by doing work without attachment man attains to the highest. — Bhagavad Gita

Yoga is like an ocean where many are still having fun surfing on the surface. What joy, what adventure!

People are perhaps losing out on the real wisdom of yoga as more and more, especially the rich, are embracing it and promoting it as the reason behind their attractive contour, youthful look and overflowing vigour. Well, thanks to them, what is practised as a strict culture and a spiritual discipline in the farthest nooks and corners of India, is becoming number one health and beauty product around the globe. And very expensive at that, worth the exploitation as a commercial commodity.

I opened a glossy yoga magazine the other day and was stunned to see a lady instructor doing Vrischikasana, or Scorpion Pose, both legs up in the air, in complete nakedness!

There's so much at stake now, where beauty is concerned. Many industries are thriving on external beauty. A beautiful body may become an object to show off, for the pride of it or the pleasure of it, but can that be the case for a beautiful heart? Is it saleable?

Isn't the real experience of yoga more internal than external? For what it really stands, outward beauty and health can only be the barest minimum by-product. Only 20 percent perhaps. Where's the other 80 percent that's not visible? How to understand and experience the greater part of yoga that can never be taught or got from reading or merely doing the postures — fully clothed or not!?

Yoga is an ancient art of living, which is also a science of achieving oneness of body, mind and spirit. It means living in perfect balance and harmony with our higher nature or the elevated sense of bliss and peace within. To achieve that end, the 8 limbs of yoga need to become a part of our system: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

There are 4 paths in which one can focus on in order to achieve that state: Raja Yoga (through mind), Bakti Yoga (through love and devotion), Karma Yoga (through action) and Jnana Yoga (through knowledge/wisdom).

Let's look deeper into Karma Yoga and see if we can understand what the verse in Bhagavad Gita means.

"To understand what it means, go into a restaurant," Master Mani said in class one day. "If it's dirty, take a broom and sweep the floor! Get a cloth and clean the table, and then sit down to eat. If you're walking somewhere and see rubbish in front of you, pick it up and throw into the dustbin without waiting for anyone else to do it. Don't complain or question who should do it. You take the responsibility and you do it and don't expect anyone to thank you for it. Do it with love, care, compassion and without expectations."

That sounded very intriguing. That very week, I walked into a vegetarian food stall and something entirely different happened. I got to know that the owners, a distressed and overburdened husband and wife, both above 50 years old, had a son with Muscular Dystrophy — a genetic disorder that weakens the muscles that help the body move. People with this disorder progressively become weaker and eventually lose their ability to walk or move around.

Then began an unusual journey which saw me walking into their cramped rented house at least once or twice a week.

Dananjaya, their son, was this beautiful, calm, composed and very intelligent child of 15 years old that became my teacher for the next few years. I was merely teaching him to read and write in Malay and English, but what he taught me could not be learnt even in the most prestigious universitites. Embodied in him was the essence of what Master teaches in class.

Danan was always in control of himself ... always centred, smiling, intriguing and so smart that he leaves me speechless with wonder. He was in India for 4 years and could speak Tamil, English, Malay, Malayalam and Telugu. He couldn't read yet learnt to use the computer and was adept at it. An unknown intelligence guided him to figure out the words printed on the screen. It took only a few months for him to learn to read in Malay, even though I had to teach him from the very basics.
With the only part of the body that he could move at all, slightly — the fingers — he conquered the computer and the mobile world.

One day, I walked into their house and was shocked to see the cupboard doors covered with mahjong papers. His illiterate parents then boasted of how Danan played movies for them via the smartphone. The phone and notebook were his dearest friends. He kept himself busy reading, playing games or trying out all sorts of applications, especially on cars — drawing, repairing, designing, etc. If I talked to him about the universe or aliens (his favourite subjects, after cars) he'd know, even more than me. He watched with interest the daily news, and educational and informative documentaries in YouTube like the National Geographic.

Danan was a great joy to be with. He had big beautiful eyes and lovely long lashes. Above all, he had a heart bigger than any sprawling temple in India. Though his parents were always anxious and worried about his condition, he was amazingly at peace with himself — unruffled and untouched by the troubles of the world. Whenever I walked into the hall, where he was permanently seated on a sofa, he looked up at me with a very captivating smile.

My little friend Danan passed away on the 4th of May. I saw him 4 days before he died and the last thing I did for him was wipe his nose. He had difficulty breathing and that was the only time, in the 3 plus years I'd known him, he looked slightly shaken up at all. But half an hour before he died, his father said Danan had wished him goodbye in a very calm manner.

When I visited the family, I wasn't expecting anything back, but the insight I got into the strength, capacity and extremely fascinating power of the body and mind, was absolutely amazing. I'm sure there's a reason why Master mentioned an eatery and I view the whole episode in my life as an extension of the lessons we receive here in class every Saturday morning at the Bangsar centre.

Lots of things happened in between that I can never explain. The family was neck-deep in debt when I got to know them. Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) helped the family through me. Lots of kindhearted MYS friends visited Danan and at one point (when the family was terribly in need of it) a beautiful soul came forward, out of nowhere, to help them settle all their debt. That was part of the power of Karma Yoga, the highest path of yoga. Doing action (karma) from the deepest centre of the being (the higher intelligence) — and what clearer definition can there be for this highest path of yoga?

On the heels of Danan's death comes the KidsCare Karma Yoga project by MYS to help uplift the lives of underprivileged children and their families. Only a few of us are involved at the moment. Others who wish to plunge into the depth of this yoga of action to discover the precious pearl radiating within, can always drop by MYS anytime. All are welcome. **YM**



To Sweat or Not to Sweat?

by Chandra Nanthakumar

Is profuse sweating good or bad for the health? That's the big question that seems to cloud every yoga practitioner's mind in this contemporary society. Many say that they feel 'good' after sweating profusely in a one-hour hatha yoga class. Some individuals are of the notion that if they sweat, toxins are removed from the body. Is that really true?

Well, a quick look into how the sweating process actually works throws the whole notion of "cleansing and sweating" into question.

The human body is equipped with two different types of sweat glands. The predominant ones, called the exocrine glands, are located all over the body. Its main function is to regulate the body temperature. Sweating is actually a response triggered by the brain, where the hypothalamus is located. Scientifically speaking, it functions as the body's thermostat of sorts. When the core temperature rises, the hypothalamus triggers the exocrine glands to produce moisture. This moisture emerges on the skin's surface as sweat.

Apocrine glands, on the other hand, exist only in certain areas like the arm pits and the navel. These glands, however, act in response to stress or stimulation. The secretions from apocrine glands may contain a few extra additives, such as proteins and fatty acids. Nevertheless, in general, all sweat contains the same primary ingredients: mostly water, some sodium and chloride. Occasionally potassium may be present.

Many young people today indulge in high-impact exercises like aerobics, body combat or body pump in order to 'sweat it out'. Some are made to believe that profuse sweating helps to detoxify the body. Claims such as this, might actually do more harm than good.

Under normal circumstances, human beings sweat whether or not they do yoga or any other forms of exercise, as sweating is a normal bodily function to regulate body temperature. It is actually the body's way of cooling itself. I supposed the next question then is how much of sweating is good or bad for the body?



It has been proven scientifically that a lot of electrolytes are lost during excessive sweating. In any case, if there is any loss of toxins, it would be minimal as perspiration contains only trace amounts of the latter. However, the loss of electrolytes would cause dehydration, and if this is not attended to, it may and will eventually affect the kidneys, and the muscles in the body may not be able to function efficiently. Therefore, for those who enjoy high-impact cum aggressive forms of exercising, it is crucial for them to not forget to consume healthy liquids like water and some sports drinks that contain electrolytes to help keep the body functioning after a substantial amount of liquid is lost through sweating.

For these obvious reasons, profuse sweating is not encouraged during the practice of yoga. As we all know, the main emphasis of yoga is on the connection between the body, mind and emotions. With regular practice of the asanas accompanied with pranayama (i.e. proper breathing), yoga nourishes the whole person in mind, body and spirit.

If one really wants to detoxify the body system, attention should be paid to the internal organs of the body such as the liver and kidneys. These are the key organs in the body that are mainly responsible for eliminating toxins from the blood. This is where yoga comes in.

The asanas (i.e. postures) in hatha yoga focus on helping improve the functions of these organs. These wonderful asanas, when practiced diligently and consistently, over longer term, helps one maximize their health and fitness and reduce the symptoms of stress and tension that so many of us suffer in our daily lives. In fact, in the practice of yoga, it is vital to actually rest in shavasana in between asanas to allow the distribution of prana and heat throughout the whole body. If sweating occurs, it would just be minimal as per the normal function of the sweat glands.

Some asanas worthy of mention are the matsyendrasana (i.e. spinal twist), standing forward bend and paschimottanasana (i.e. seated forward bend). For example, paschimottanasana has a great impact on the internal organs such as the stomach and pancreas. These organs are not only massaged, but the nervous system is also invigorated.

Matsyendrasana, on the other hand, helps stimulates the pancreas, liver, spleen, kidneys, stomach and ascending and descending colons. This asana has been proven useful in the treatment of diabetes, constipation, dyspepsia and urinary problems. It tones the nerve roots, and adjusts and realigns the vertebral column. The back muscles are pulled and stretched in a different direction than usual and this relieves them of tension.

All these asanas can be done by just going into the pose gently, holding in it for a short period and coming out of it gracefully without profuse sweating. One will be able to realise its vitalizing effects almost immediately.

If one can practice yoga gently while enjoying the benefits, is there a need to overstretch, workout aggressively and cause the body to sweat beyond limits? **YM**



Let's Eat Satvic Food!

by Suresh Paunrajan



Today we are living in a world where food is abundant. Malls or super markets have sprouted at almost every corner we turn. In this life style of consumerism there are plenty of choices and varieties of food to pick and choose from. But how would we know if what we are eating is good for us?

I used to wonder why we always feel sleepy and tired after a heavy meal. If the purpose of food is to energize the body, shouldn't we feel more energised after eating? Instead it only causes lethargy. Many of the answers came through yogic philosophy where it is mentioned that there are 3 characteristics (Tri-Guna) of the mind: Tamas, Rajas and Satvic. In the tamasic state the mind feels sleepy and drowsy, very active in the rajasic state and then very much spiritually oriented in the satvic state.

The food we eat also has these 3 characteristics. Most of the food we consume today are tamasic or rajasic and this causes many ailments to the body and also the mind. We all might have heard of this saying, "We become what we eat". But how many of us have felt it? We can all understand the food we eat has an impact on the body. So how can we understand also its impact on the mind?

Even modern science is trying to understand this, why and how food can affect our mind. Research has been conducted where young children were given a more fruit based diet over a few weeks, and during this period they are observed to display more of their cooperative and satvic nature. Subsequently when their diet is changed to rajasic type foods such as bread and others, the children started to display more aggressive or irritable tendencies.

It is hard to believe that the food I eat has not only an impact on my mind, but also my thoughts! So I have spent more time researching on the meaning of food. Gradually I began to understand the mysteries of food. The food that we eat nowadays is actually full of toxins, which is why almost every health awareness program is emphasizing on detoxification. Our body has many mechanisms to protect itself from the intake of toxins. The body only absorbs 10% of what we eat, and the rest of the 90% it pushes out. Even then the 10% still has some toxins, and that is why detox is a necessity.

I found out that by eating satvic food the body takes-in less toxins. And less toxins in the body means anti-aging and less ailments. So how does it affect the mind? If there are more toxins in the blood, and this blood flows through our brain continuously, how can we expect our brain to produce good emotions and good thoughts? The body and mind is inseparable, whatever goes deep inside the body also goes deep inside the mind.

So what is this Satvic food? 'Sat' in Sanskrit means truth. There must be a reason for some foods to be categorized as true foods. The ancient yogic masters seem to have understood the connection between the body and mind much better than how we understand it today. There must be a reason why the yogic scriptures talk about the importance food and their inference to the mind. Most foods in its natural form, not modified by processing is termed as satvic, such as fruits and fresh vegetables. And such satvic food is naturally an alkaline diet.

For my personal journey the only way for me to fully understand this is by changing. I can see that the one that craves for certain taste and food is not the body but the mind. The body only needs a little bit of food to stay operational. But the mind that is accustomed to a certain taste and type of food refuses to change. And so I started adopting a gradual change in my diet. I have become more conscious of the food that I pick up in the supermarket by noting if the ingredients are natural or any chemicals are added. If there is one non-natural ingredient inside, I would completely avoid taking it. I also have a fully fruit based meal at least once or twice a day. This really helps my mind to be energetic and centred, even my sleep cycle has improved. Sleep is also connected to the food we eat, as it is the tamasic nature of the mind that makes us think we can sleep just a few minutes more.

This body of ours is a gift and our body is our temple. We need to be more conscious of what goes inside our body. We have no right to stuff it with more toxins and tamasic food. It is our responsibility to take care of our body by consuming more satvic food rather than throwing-in whatever we like. **YM**

EVENTS Yoga Awareness Workshop

by Tracy Ann Rani Francis

Balairaya JKP Zon 24, Taman Sungai Besi Indah,
Seri Kembangan
Malaysia Day - September 16, 2013

On the morning of Malaysia Day we gathered at the Balairaya Taman Sungai Besi Indah to celebrate Malaysia Day with the practice of Yoga and fellowship with the community. It was an informal and simple gathering with the crowd which were mostly children, enjoying the new and fun experiences with yoga asanas that brought much excitement and laughter to all.



The MAYI team led by a very enthusiastic yoga teacher, Saravana Sealan, came prepared with sequences of standing postures which were mostly catered for an adult audience. Pleasantly surprised by the number of children that turned up, the team swiftly adapted the session to incorporate more Yoga Kids postures and some Partner Yoga so that parents and children could connect with each other.

It was evident the audience appreciated the session from the many feedbacks received on how thoroughly they were impressed and how good they felt after the session. Many were keen to participate in future sessions and also expressed interest in joining a yoga class. There were many smiles throughout the session and what was most encouraging was how the audience especially the children persisted to get the postures right even though it was their first attempt. On a personal note, this workshop has shown me the happiness that we can bring through the sharing of Yoga and has encouraged me to persevere in my journey as a yoga instructor. All in all, a wonderful and AWESOME experience!



A few words from the volunteers

Namaskar,
I personally felt that the event was a success by the good response from people who gathered on that day. With their encouragement we started our programme. We had a mix age group of people from children to teenagers to adults. Thanks to our friends from MYS who performed the Yoga asanas on the spot without any preparation. The crowd enjoyed the partner yoga poses & they started to mingle each other. Children enjoyed the elephant walk and when we coaxed the adults to try it as well, they without hesitation formed a circle & enjoyed it thoroughly. We were grateful that the Nature was kind to us, as it was a pleasant weather to

perform yoga in open space. Thanks to Sumi (MYS) who asked me to participate in this memorable event. On this Malaysian Day hope we have done yoga awareness programme as community project where yoga can reach all. " Learn to teach Teach to learn" .....namaskar.

Regards with love,
Mrs Sujatha.

I was initially very nervous to face the people who had gathered on that day for the Yoga Awareness campaign in their neighbourhood. Whilst, the event as I was multitasking, in between performing the Yoga Asanas, taking photographs, helping the participants and so forth, my nervousness dissolved and I began to Enjoy the experience.

Yoga has provided me the opportunity to grow, while I get the pleasure of meeting and making new friends, as new awareness emerges. The initial anxiety disappears as we practise regularly. Even if it's Not perfect now, I am improving.. To the rest of the participants, I urge them to come join the Fun! Students, Come! Come on!

Namaskar
- Crystal

A few words from Ms Thilla , the Organiser.

Good Morning to you
The event at JKP Balairaya Tmn Sungai Besi indah was a successful one, importantly, I must thank your team and Mr Sealan, Mrs Sujatha, Ms. Tracy, Ms. Crystal, Ms. Sue and others who helped in the event and create awareness on yoga. The response was good and thumbs up to Mr Sealan and his group. Now he had created the Yoga awareness, I shall actively do the recruitment.

I have at least two class to start with one adult and one children class. We intend to put up a banner to get more recruitment. Thank you for bringing yoga to the community. I am glad I had started this.

A few words from a participant

A participant said "I never knew Yoga that I felt was such a simple exercise can work your complete body in such a short time" - She was particularly talking about "Druta Utkatasana - Dynamic Energy Pose".

Dynamic Energy Pose Asana , has a similar effect of doing a 100 metres dash, without having the need to even move the legs, that's HOW Amazing Yoga Is!



A Gift to Heal the Whole Person

Yoga Therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and well-being through the application of the philosophy and practices of yoga. It is very much about the whole person taking into account that the disease to be treated may be related to an emotional element, or it may be from lifestyle, some habit that is not serving the individual. The habit may be a physical movement pattern, mental process pattern or other patterns.

Yoga Therapy complements medical treatment and should not be considered as a substitute for an ongoing medical care. It has the advantages of enhancing the progress of medical treatment and also the process of recovery. By stretching all muscles and joints through yoga postures blood supply to various areas of the body is increased which helps to flush away the toxins. In general many individuals find that they experience during and after treatment an increase in flexibility thereby reducing bodily discomforts which may have appeared due to a disease or long periods of being incapacitated. Underworked parts of the body are gently exercised in ways that they weren't before, while internal organs and glands functions are also gradually stimulated if sluggish or regulated if overactive.

Breathing techniques will work their magic internally by increasing the flow of oxygen helping to relieve stress, calm the nervous system and strengthen the respiratory and digestive systems. Natural efficient breathing is reestablished leading to a clearer mind, peaceful emotions and heightened energy levels.

Relaxation methods work on providing effective rest that allows for a better healing process and neutralizes strains or stresses that has taken its toll on the body and mind. Meditation, positive



visualisations and other lesser known practices such as internal cleansings, mudras and bandhas completes the healing process on a deeper yet subtler level of the autonomic nervous system.

A full medical examination performed by a qualified practitioner before embarking on Yoga Therapy will present a clearer picture of exactly which condition is being dealt with and to know of any complications involved. For example: Diabetes might entail heart disease and poor circulation in the legs, among other issues, therefore a particular yoga practice might be contraindicated for the heart disease but beneficial for the circulation in the legs. A set of therapeutic yoga practices can be worked out and modified to encompass all the issues related to that person's diabetes, appropriate to

the moment, the person, the age, and the situation.

A yoga therapist will begin by taking a detailed medical history of the client as well as discuss physical, mental and lifestyle issues. The more in depth the information the better as this is what the practitioner will use to analyse the condition and focus to specifically address the issues in question safely and positively. Subsequently the therapy plan is formed and further developed according to progress.



An ideal yoga therapy plan allows one to go within the self and find elements that need correction. Drawing out the negative behaviors or traits and bringing them into reality creates the basis for change. Yoga therapy is thus useful for the purpose of introspection, exercise, healing and relaxation. It can affect change from within with minimal effort.

Whilst Yoga Therapy can be used to treat a variety of ailments and injuries, it is relatively accessible and inexpensive. Yoga is a self-care practice, so it is a good match for individuals who want to take a more active role in their healthcare. It focuses on the interactions among the brain, mind, body, and behavior, and on the powerful ways in which emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and behavioral factors can directly affect health. This mind-body therapy approach respects and enhances each person's capacity for self-knowledge and self-care.

Yoga therapy provides coping mechanisms as well as many positive physical benefits for a wide range of chronic diseases. It's become especially popular for musculoskeletal issues like lower and upper back pain, sciatica, and shoulder, neck and hip pain. It can also be viewed as a natural approach strategy in managing high blood pressure, asthma, the treatment of depression, anxiety, coping with the effects of cancer treatments, or treating symptoms of auto immune diseases. A unique benefit of Yoga Therapy is that it provides in the form of relaxation which allow people suffering from internal stresses to reach a point of calm and peace. When they achieve this state, they are fully aware of being in the present moment. They are allowed to let go of the pain, the frustration, and the negative emotions that often accompany these illnesses and may bog them down further. During Yoga Therapy, a client is able to separate themselves from the possibility of pain, the regret of past choices, and the fear of death.



Perhaps Yoga Therapy's greatest gift is to serve the whole person and to help the whole person recover not just from the problem, but from the stress of injury or illness, and to recruit the entire body to help in that undertaking through a sound practice adapted to specific needs. Also with renewed self-knowledge one has better confidence and understanding to maintain a more balanced lifestyle for health and well-being. **YM**

The Yoga Therapist Certification Course is commencing on 22nd Dec 2013. For more details, **call 03-2260 5322** or **03-7726 6682**, or log in to **www.mayiyogaacademy.com**

Featured Asana
Kandharasana (Shoulder Pose)

Step by Step:

1. Lie flat on the back.
2. Bend both knees, placing soles of the feet flat on floor with heels close to the buttocks. The feet and knees are comfortably hip width apart. Arms by the sides of the trunk, palms down.
3. Inhale, lift the pelvis and arch the back upward without straining.
4. Gradually increase lift of the pelvis while moving the chest closer towards the chin, maintain the position of both feet and shoulders. In this final position, the torso is supported by the back of head, neck, shoulders, arms and feet.
   As a variation, after raising the pelvis, hands are joined under the back with fingers interlaced and straightened arms are pressed firmly into the floor to further ground the final posture.
   Another variation is to roll shoulders back to further squeeze the shoulder blades together and support lower back and hips with hands.
5. Breath naturally while holding this pose for as long as it's comfortable
6. Exhale while lowering the hips and slowly stretch out the legs one by one to relax in shavasana.

Benefits:

- Realigns the spine, eliminates rounded shoulders and relieves backache.
- Massages and stretches the colon and abdominal organs, improving digestion.
- Tones the female reproductive organs and is useful for women who have the tendency to miscarry.
- Good for the management of menstrual disorders, prolapse, asthma, and various bronchial and thyroid conditions.

Contra-indications:

People suffering from peptic or duodenal ulcers, or abdominal hernia.





Articles by Practitioners

Shankaprakshalana

by K. Saravana Sealan

At Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course(SYKIC) we plunged into our childlike innocence to enable us to communicate Yoga to children in the most fun loving and creative ways. After which I was getting ready to enrol in Self Mastery (Kriya) Course with dear Master Mani.

So much has been said about Kriya and Self Mastery, that the mind was getting all suited up for an exciting 'mystical' adventure to happen, while on the other hand, we know that nothing of such is to happen.

"How do I free myself from this distraction that could compromise the learning?" I asked myself. To bring the mind to 'tabula rasa' or 'a clean slate' before it receives the impressions gained from previous experiences, was the phrase that came to mind. It was time for an overhaul before the machine called 'mind' is ready to undertake a new task, towards heightening its consciousness, preparing for the Self Mastery lessons to be effective. That was when Shankhaprakshalana identified and presented itself to me.

Shankhaprakshalana - is said to be one of the major cleansing techniques in Yoga. **Shankha** meaning 'conch', as the name refers to the winding inner nature of the intestines resembling the conch, while **prakshalana** means to 'flush', therefore denoting a cleansing or purification.

Throughout history, from the Yogis to the Egyptians and Greeks, people have benefited psychologically from a good purge of the intestines. A large part of our immune system is the GALT, or gut-associated lymphoid tissue, which resides within the walls of the small intestines.

There are 5 valves in our food passage - oesophageal, pyloric, ileocecal, colon and anus. The complexity of the Gastrontestinal tract (GIT) and its sensitivity towards day to day tensions are common causes to restrict the flow in the system, where they lose their natural function and become inefficient and gradually start to pack up. This causes auto-toxemia, a state where the body's own wastes begin to poison itself. Junk food, sedentary lifestyles, late eating hours, habitual snacking and dehydration, are also common reasons that the digestive system becomes inefficient at assimilating and eliminating thus causing stomach ailments.

Shankhaprakshalana practice re-conditions the function of the valves and eliminates all types of toxins from the bloodstream, alleviates digestive problems such as indigestion, gas, acidity and constipation. It generally tones the liver and other digestive organs and glands. It has been used in the cure of diabetes mellitus, hypoglycemia, obesity, high blood cholesterol and high lipid levels. It strengthens the immune system, alleviating allergies, immunological problems, and helps relieve the symptoms of arthritis and chronic inflammatory diseases. Excessive mucus is reduced relieving asthma, chronic colds and sinusitis. It thus, purifies the blood and alleviates skin problems such as pimples, boils and eczema.

Shankhaprakshalana though seem like a practice concerning the stomach and intestines, it however creates a corrective action that affects the lungs, skin, sinus area, nervous system, the whole body, as the practitioner continues a special diet through the stipulated timeframe.

While from the pranic standpoint, it is documented that Shankhaprakshalana, recharges the entire Pranic body, removes blockages from the Nadis and purifies all the Chakras. The harmony of the five pranas

(*Vyana , Udana, Samana, Apana and Prana*) is restored and the energy level is raised. It prepares the way for higher states of consciousness.

It is said that any practice, performed after this cleansing practice gives awesome results. Meanwhile Yoga, that views a person holistically, hence sees it as when one cleanses the physical body, the energetic, emotional and mental aspects of our being gets a cleaning as well. Purifying aligns our koshas to resonate with a higher vibration. According to yogic physiology, the human framework is comprised of five koshas (metaphorical bodies/sheaths). Like the Russian dolls, each metaphorical 'body' is contained within the next:

1. The food or material body - Annamaya kosha ;
2. The mental body - Manomaya kosha ;
3. The bioplasmic or vital energy body - Pranamaya kosha ;
4. The psychic or higher mental body - Vijanamaya kosha ; and
5. The transcendental or bliss body - Anandamaya kosha.

Now, as I am writing this article for Yoga Mail, the mind begins to wonder if Shankhapralakshana could be the most pertinent contributor to the cleansing of the Annamaya kosha, setting free the impurities caught within the Manomaya kosha, allowing the body to be more in-tune with nature through natural heightening of Pranamaya kosha, reaching harmony and balance with the Vijanamaya kosha, hence, touching and allowing the Anandamaya kosha to permeate through this very mundane body, as illumination happens!

Other benefits are that the body feels lighter, with increased flexibility. The various metabolic acids and chemical wastes causing stiffness, lethargy and heaviness are washed away. A clearer and alert mind becomes more and more prominent.

As there are some contra-indications for people suffering from intestinal ulcers, high blood pressure or any serious medical condition to seek guidance from a qualified instructor. Shankhaprakshalana should be avoided during pregnancy and menstruation.



The Shankhaprakshalana practice involves salt solution intake, a few yogic postures (asana) and a special 'kicheri' diet . Why salt one might ponder? The salt solution has the same specific gravity as our blood so our kidneys don't have to process it, and it's not absorbed into the blood. The solution simply makes its way through the Gastrontestinal tract (GIT) causing a "tidal wave" effect, pushing everything along until it comes out the other end.

While the 'kicheri' diet provides the basic and essential nutrients to the body through rice for carbohydrate, mung 'dhall' beans for protein and ghee for fat, in a porridge form that is easily digestible, for a duration of 30 days to get the best results. **YM**

Articles by Practitioners

Himalaya 2013: A Complete Journey (Part 2)

by Vijaya

The beauty of the whole trip was the people in it. Pure angels travelled with me and I was blessed. There's too much to write about each of them, so I'll just mention a few. Saravana was fairy god father waiting on each and everyone, ensuring their safety, comfort and save return. Renuka teacher made our hearts swell with joy with her beautiful voice, Magen and Mohana Raj were just awesome in cracking jokes. Sumi did something that totally touched my heart.

Whatever purity means, it's absolutely lovely to witness, especially in adults. The roads are so narrow that at some parts one vehicle has to give way to another before it can pass through. At one junction, three vehicles, including a truck full of Indian army officers were in a deadlock. One gallant officer got down and rectified the problem by getting the bus in front of us to back off. After that, when the truck was passing by us, Sumi announced to the children "Okay now, wave to the soldiers!" I'm not sure if the children did, but she did (smile). I also always catch Master waving and mentally communicating with children from other vehicles.

Velawan reflected how a clouded mind obstructs it from seeing the beauty behind anything. Likewise, an unhealthy body will stand in the way and prevent us from enjoying what we're doing.
Throughout the trip, the only person who looked totally Indian, dressed fully in "dhoti" and "jippa" was Mr Lim, and Michael had energy that flowed like Ganga. Whenever I see him, no matter what situation, he's enthusiastically waving his hands, exclaiming "Woooh!"

On the 3rd day, climbing up Yamunotri was very tiring but exciting, and amazingly fulfilling. A group of us were the last to finish the 5km tracking up the queen of mountains, and the 5km down. On the way back, the more we dragged ourselves forward, the darker it became, and farther and farther away seemed civilisation. Suddenly, someone pointed up to the skies and all our jaws dropped in amazement. The drudgery of the walk was then lifted by one of the most beautiful sights we have ever beheld up in the sky. Centillions of stars like diamonds practically lid up the whole of the celestial sphere. One would probably needs eyes all over the head to absorb that most magnificent of sights.

Tracking up Kedarnath was a major test to our patience, strength, stamina and goodwill. All of us have fantastic stories to narrate about our individual and group experiences. I decided to leave the rest and venture up on my own. Much to the chagrin of the pony-wala, I got down and practically ran all the way up the first 7km. If Murali didn't stop me half-way, make me wear more layers of clothing and take a pony up instead, I'd probably have frozen up somewhere near the peak.

At the Maharastra Mandal, with no heater, no proper curtains and doors that don't need to be locked, I waited for Pugunes, Nirmel, Kogie, Saravana, Uma and a few others to come back. I was worried. It was too cold to sleep and I spent the night walking around the lobby, doing Manipuraka and venturing out of the hotel.

As I approached a dark alley, almost around 3am, I became aware of a slim figure at the other end. I'm sure I shocked the life out of her because I was dressed up more like a pirate — in long john, few layers of t-shirts, thick woolen blouse, dark jacket and monkey-cap — while she, in that freezing atmosphere, was only loosely clad in a thin red sari. Phew! After the night of madness and extreme test at Kedarnath, the next day was but a continuation of that.

Gosh, my toes were aching horribly and luckily Meiwan and Nemala accompanied me in the very painful pony ride back down the 14km Kedarnath track. I wanted to give up, but Meiwan the motivator made sure I didn't. Later, I was feeling numb, weak, feverish and was at the point of breaking as we had to wait for more than an hour for the bus at the foothills of the great mountain (with fully snow-covered neighbours taking all our breath away). The toes felt like they had been stepped on over and over again and almost crushed due to our brave walk up and down the steep Yamounotri two days earlier. Asha asked if I was alright and I was quite surprised when my voice actually trembled.

I remembered then what Master said about being centred. I picked myself up, put some vigour into the limp, bombarded my mind with some super positive thoughts and within half an hour could feel the fever

going away — without the help of any medicines, of course. I saw that very transformation taking place in Saandhi, Velawan, Revathy, Proshana, Kala, Renuka teacher, Uma, Rutharra, Sumi and Nemala. They were suffering from motion sickness, body aches, sprained ankles, stomach problems, etc, but showed amazing strength and absolute determination to have a fulfilling journey, as they decided to claw on to their soaring spirits rather than limiting/blocking thoughts of weaknesses that were pulling them down.

The amazing thing about the journey was the ease and speed with which all of us recovered and how it was possible for all 43 of us, ranging from six years-old to above 70, to have a great time.

The rivers were just too fascinating for words. India seems to rever it with so much of devotion that thousands actually gather at the banks to say thank you, pray for its continuous prosperity, love it like a mother and place it high up among the Gods. There are myths and legends for everything in India, including these.

Near Badrinath, the source of river Saraswathy was so amazing that we were very blessed to have been there and seen that. Some of my friends, chiefly Proshana, ventured behind a wall to have a direct view of the river source. The wall was quite high and uneven, but my heart was leaping with excitement at the sight of these people. Nirmell, the beautiful person he is, saw that, gave a look of determination and with one helpful, strong hand helped me up that wall. That look, in that split-second, was God-like (smile).

Talking about hands, I was very touched by the way the pony-walas did not show any qualms about placing their hands under our horse dung-covered boots, to help us up the horses (or perhaps mules, like Murali said). They themselves were perpetually covered in dirt and were carrying people double their sizes. Many still in school-going age, patiently toiled up and down the mountains many, many kilometres a day.

While travelling along Bhagirathi, I was so drawn to its power, grace and tremendous force that the question that kept coming to me was... "How can I be like this river?" It doesn't ask for anything, it doesn't seek, it doesn't have any need for anything from anyone. All it does is flow so majestically, with so much of power, vigour and vitality that an entire nation is drawn to it. As it streams down, along the way it gives life to millions of people, and be so stunningly beautiful at it that it's "Oh, so irressistible!" (like my guru).

There's something called the higher source, or what we call God, behind the flow of the river or anything at all in the sphere of creation. And when you lose yourself in what you see, then you are that ... you are Bhagirathi! There was a cool sensation running down my neck. I looked at Master and Master said, "Just Be!"

Here ends a complete journey.
Note: Just as I finished writing this story, devastating news about natural calamities in Uttarakhand arrives. Nature turns his face and at the other side we see fury. I remember Murali saying that G.O.D stands for Generator (Brahma), Operator (Vishnu) and Destroyer (Shiva). **YM**



Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

by Jamie Spatafore

IV.4 nirmanacittani asmitamatrat

Constructed or created mind springs from the sense of individuality (asmita).

The biggest asset and liability the western world has given civilization in the last 500 years is the idea that the individual rules above all. This is a great asset because without this feeling, many of the world's accomplishments (space travel, technology, etc) would have never been achieved. There is this feeling deep in the mind of the western psyche that says "I can do anything I want" or "I am the master of this world, let me manipulate it to my will". Where there is an asset there is also a liability. Because of this sense of individuality, we will stop at nothing to get our way. What directly follows that way of thinking is a lot of senseless violence, a lot of grief, and a lot of pain.

There are very few beings that truly belong to the brotherhood of man and woman. It is harsh but it is true. Let us look at ourselves. I will identify myself as male and then white (Caucasian) and then American (my passport says so) and then from Tennessee (where I was born) and so on and so on. Is that really who I am or are those just coincidences that happened to me?

The easiest thing for any of us to do is use the word "I". Just take an afternoon and watch yourself. Look at how many times you say "I". I want this. I am hungry. I am tired. I am being mistreated. I, I, I. The sages will say the only problem here is with the point of reference. When we say "I", what are we referring to? Are we referring to this body that is so tall, weighs so much and does or does not have hair? Are we referring to this mind which thinks thousands, no, millions of thoughts a day? The majority of us do. That reference, the sages say, is what gets us into all of this trouble.

If I am an individual then I must be apart from the others out there. This is me and that is them. There is a rift. This is not union. This is disunion. Sure we can tell ourselves and others, if they care to listen, that we do all sorts of charity and we join all types of groups. All the while, our minds are trying to figure out how to manipulate things to our advantage. What do I have to say to get the teacher to like me, this individual?

What's so bad about this? It is bad because this sense of individuality is what keeps us separate from ourselves and others. We think we are living life to the fullest but if there is any hint of separation then we cease to experience what God intended which is a full life experience of the whole.

Now let us clarify. The sages say there is nothing wrong in having goals. There is nothing wrong in wanting to achieve those goals. That takes effort and that takes willpower. However, we have to be very honest with ourselves in how we are approaching life. Are we unintentionally alienating ourselves because of our false belief that we are this body and mind? Or are we accepting that while we have this body and mind, there is something else that makes us exactly like those who we think are separate from us? The former is what leads to death. The latter is what leads to life. Peace. **YM**

At Your Fingertips: Ashwagandha

by Lee Yan



The winter cherry is a small erect shrub which roots are used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. In Ayurveda, it carries the name 'Ashwagandha' (Withania somnifera). Traditionally, this herb is harvested in the fall to be eaten throughout the winter as it supports immunity, stamina and structural strength during the hard winter months. Other than in India, Ashwagandha is also widely used by native Africans as well as Native Americans for warding off sickness and infections. Today this herb has become popular worldwide due to its multiple benefits.

The Adaptogenic/ Anti Stress Herb

This herb is widely beneficial as an anti-stress to aid the mind and body in adapting and to cope with our ever stressful modern lifestyle. The herb is known for its exceptional ability to provide immense energy during the day and at the same time promote quality sleep at night according to reliable research studies conducted at several universities worldwide. When our body is exposed to long term physical or emotional stress, we may experience the feeling of constant exhaustion or being overwhelmed, brain fog and craving for sweet or salty foods.

Ashwagandha helps to relief stress by restoring the adrenal glands which are triggered by our physiological "fight or flight" response. Many herbalists value this herbal medicine's unique

ability to encourage adrenal recovery and stabilize moods as it is a powerful soothing tonic.

Researches have suggested that Ashwagandha is effective in promoting energy and stamina without stimulating the heart. This traditional herb is great for building libido and vitality for men by promoting fertility and sperm count. Hence the name Ashwagandha literally means 'Grounded Strength of a Stallion'. In Ayurveda, it has a traditional use in supporting rejuvenation after illness and acts as a sexual enhancer for both men and women whereby the quality of reproductive tissues are revitalised and sexual potency enlivened.



Other Benefits

Other beneficial properties of Ashwagandha are promoting recovery, rejuvenating and life-extending. As a body-balancing herb, the root is helpful in inducing deep sleep and therefore, excellent for treating insomnia. Mixed with warm milk and taken before bed, Ashwagandha is useful for people who suffer from insomnia and anxiety.

Ashwagandha is also reputed in Ayurveda for rejuvenating conditions of the nerves and muscle weakness as it improves cognitive ability, memory, and mental agility. It also possesses antioxidant properties which are beneficial in preventing early aging while rejuvenating the whole body to youthfulness. Ashwagandha is a great natural remedy for rheumatoid and osteoarthritis as it has tonic and anti-inflammatory properties. It also possesses properties which act as a diuretic, therefore is excellent for treating urinary tract infections (UTI).

In its application for hair issues, Ashwagandha inhibits the loss of melanin in hair, the pigment that is responsible for forming hair colour. It contains the amino acid, tyrosine, that is necessary for the formation of melanin. Ashwagandha benefits by the presence of high amino acids, anti-oxidants, and iron that acts in many healthy effects.

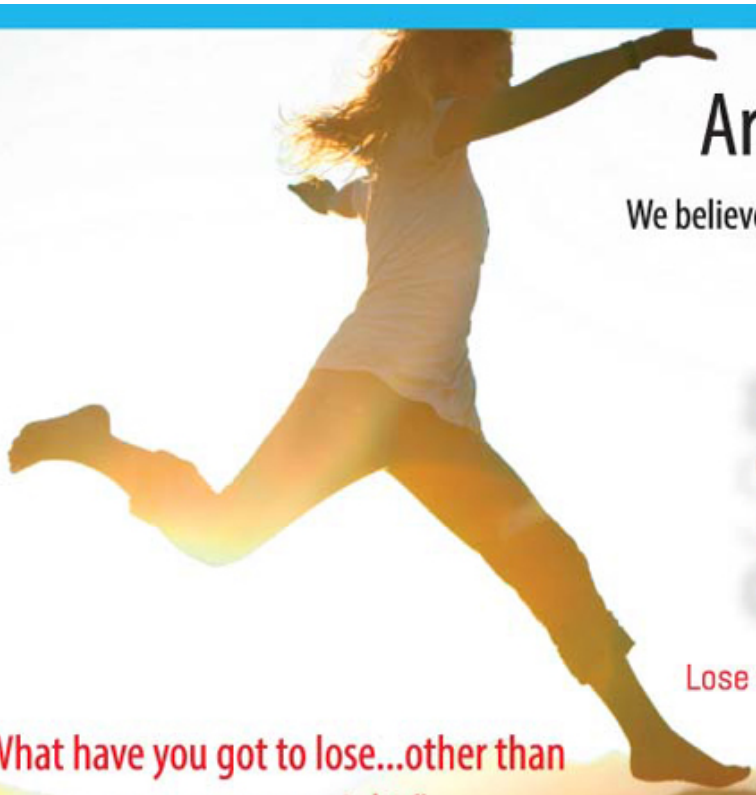
Anti-oxidant effects: Ashwagandha has natural anti-oxidants that improve overall health and fights body fats. It improves immune function and helps one to follow diet and workout schedules.

Boost energy levels: Ashwagandha has adaptogens that naturally boosts the energy levels supporting and enchaining the entire nervous system that may limit human body for intense training / workouts. Ashwagandha can be used as a supplement to aid weight loss.

Decrease blood sugar: Ashwagandha benefits by potentially decreasing the body's fasting blood sugar levels to improve glucose metabolism. Blood sugar level is stabilized which is helpful for diabetics.

Decrease cortisol: Ashwagandha naturally helps lower cortisol levels. Cortisol acts as a stress hormone in the human body that causes obesity, diseases related to the heart and diabetes.

This great herb is one of the most popular and most sought after by people around the world for it's immense functionality and efficacy. If you would like to know more or purchase this herb, do contact us at NSR Centre: 03-77241072. **YM**



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Yoga Therapy for the Management of Depression

by Surya Tay

Depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors and the symptoms may include persistent sad or "empty" feelings, hopelessness, guilt, low self-esteem, restlessness, loss of interest in activities or hobbies, fatigue, poor memory and concentration, insomnia or excessive sleeping, overeating or appetite loss. Serious depression may lead to thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts while aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems do not seem to ease even with treatment when one is in depression

People who have depression along with another medical illness tend to have more severe symptoms of both depression and the medical illness and more difficulty adapting to their medical condition.

From a yogic perspective the state of depression happens when tremendous amounts of emotional and neuromuscular energy is locked up inside the individual and manifesting as depression. Yoga therapy for managing depression, cultivates a positive new habit of mind body training while the mind switches off from getting lost in the depression loop. It can also help improve the outcome of treating the co-occurring illness.

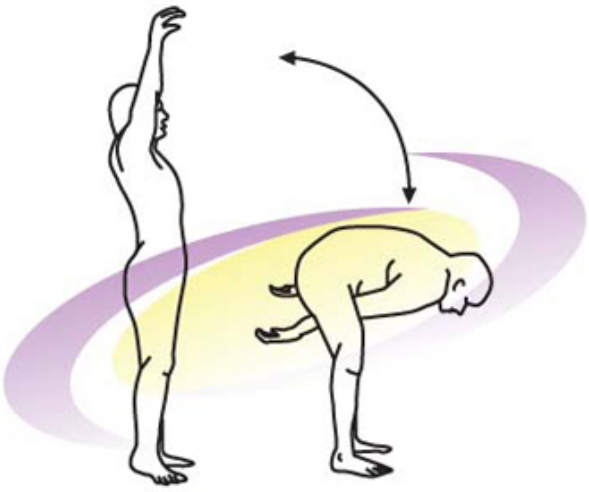
1. **Practice Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations- a flowing sequence of 12 yoga postures) to activate solar energy to flow through the pingala nadi which is underactive when in depression.**
2. **Alternate Bhujangasana and Pavartasana**



3. **Gatyatmak meru vakrasana**



4. **Utthita lolasana**



5. **Chakrasana**



Relaxation:

Nadanusandhana which combines the use sound vibrations, mudras and simple sitting/kneeling asana

Pranayama (Breathing Techniques):

1. Kapalbhati
2. Abdominal breathing

Shatkarma (Cleansing Techniques):

1. Jala Neti (Nasal Cleansing)
2. Kunjal

Karma Yoga:

Involvement in social work activities can help remove one from the absorption with depressive thought patterns. It is also an avenue for creativity that lifts the spirit and can invoke a sense of gratitude to what one already has.

All yoga techniques should be learned from an experienced yoga therapist.

For your first free yoga therapy consultation, please call: 03-2260 5322 (Brickfields/Bangsar); 03-7727 6682 (Damansara Utama)

Eco's Echoes: Vibrations

by Suresh Paunrajan

If you ask people who like fishing, they will tell you it is best early morning and late afternoon for a good catch. I have often wondered why and also why the birds always sing early in the morning. Why do sunrise and sunset have an effect on nature's creatures. Somehow during these particular hours, all living beings are more receptive to the vibrations around us. They also behave in a more harmonious way as if they are listening to a hidden music within themselves. So the question is, do these enchanting hours of the day have an effect on us too? Why are they also the recommended best timing for meditation and yogic practices? Maybe during these timings, the souls of all living beings including ours are aligned to the rhythm of the universe naturally.

People who play or practice music will also be able to understand this phenomenon of the universal rhythm better. According to Indian classical music, the "saptaswara" (7 musical notes) were formulated by listening to the sounds of different animals. People always wonder what the connection is between vibrations and music. They are actually two kinds of sound frequencies. One is within our normal hearing range while the other we cannot hear. So to make sense of the second category we call them vibrations. All sounds and music are formed by vibrations.

We can have a deeper understanding when we analyze the meaning of the Sanskrit word "nada". The root meaning of "nada" is flow-of-consciousness. But this word also means vibrations and sound. It is amazing to see how this word connects vibrations with our consciousness. This can explain why everybody likes music, why our mind feels so enchanted when we hear a beautiful melody. It's because there is a deeper connection between our consciousness with vibrations or music.

From this, ancient Indians derived the science of Nada yoga, which again has 2 categories: the science of inner sounds and the science of outer sounds. The easiest example to understand inner sounds is the vibrations of the heart known as Anahata-Nada, and it means the unstruck sound/vibration.

"The deer is entrapped by sweet sound.
The cobra is enchanted by sweet music.
Raga Punnagavarrali charms the cobra.
Nada entraps the mind.
The mind gets Laya in sweet nada.
Therefore you can easily control the mind
Through the practice of Nada Yoga"
(Swami Sivananda)

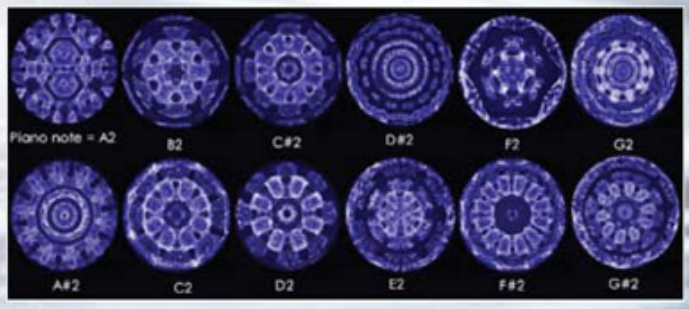
We can understand how the vibrations are so deeply connected to us from all of this. But can the vibrations also be responsible for the shapes we see in this world, or even the form of our own body. Could it be an expression of some music? Australia's original inhabitants, who supposedly have the oldest continuous culture on earth, tell of how our ancestors made the world come into being through song. Today's modern science has a study of this in a specialised field called Cymatics.

The ancient Chinese singing-fountain invention is indeed a Cymascope that produces visual patterns and shapes when certain vibration or music passes through it. Beautiful mandala like patterns emerge from it as the music changes its tone.

As I marvel at how vibrations are not only connected to but also make up the world that we live in, I came across a TV series called "Touch". It illustrates how the world is not only shaped by this subtle rhythm but also incidents that are happening all around us, and that our everyday life is connected to one another. Although the TV series showed this connection via numbers, we can correlate better by understanding that numbers are just like what frequency is to sound.

It's amazing to see how there is flow and rhythm in the world around us. And life itself is actually music. As our yogic practices go deeper we become more aware of these connections. Besides feeling the rhythm of the universe, we will also be able to flow along with it. **YM**

Some pictures from a Cymascope:



Inner Insights: The Wonders of Teaching and Karma Yoga

by Daisy Lopez

All major religious traditions stress the importance of service to others: being a companion to the sick and dying, cooking meals for the hungry, collecting clothes for the poor, and so on. But that doesn't make karma yoga a universal spiritual practice. For me, in the context of yoga, service is not just a spiritual obligation or the righteous thing to do as it is promoted. It is also a path to self-realization, making it a supercharged version of the adage that when you give, you also receive. So does that mean you are guaranteed enlightenment for doing some volunteer work? Can anyone sign up for this amazing program of karma yoga projects by Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS)? How else will your life change if you do? You won't find pat answers to these questions because, as described in the Gita, karma yoga is a mysterious process that reveals its true nature only to those who pursue it.

The first mystery comes wrapped in the definition of karma yoga, which doesn't strictly speaking mean "service" (often referred to in yogic circles by its Sanskrit name, seva). Instead, the desire to do service is part of what's revealed on the karma yoga path. At some point, however, the distinction between ordinary actions and service, or actions to relieve the suffering of others, disappears. Yoga teaches me to develop spiritually so that my awareness and compassion grow, making me more alert to those suffering around me and less able to turn away from them. In essence, the pain of others becomes our own, and I feel driven to relieve it, much as we'd instinctively act to end the pain in our own body or heart.

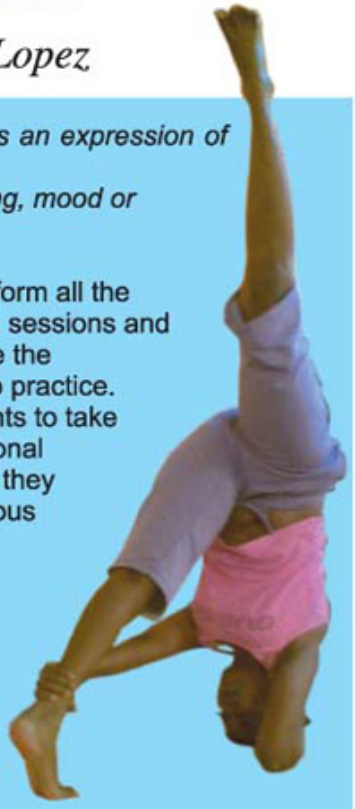
Throughout my eight years journey of full time instructing Yoga, I find that it has guided me towards 'perfection'. The practice has shown me how to share, to care, and to use the vast knowledge to be creative in problem solving. I started instructing yoga at children's homes, nurse training centres, a government hospital as well as international and government schools. I also teach special children with split personality or autism. These kids are really amazing and they can do most of the asana and pranayama without any assistance.

Most teachers ask me if the students can understand what I teach, as I teach in English and translate the Sanskrit asana names. Yes, certainly they are able to. Yoga asanas are very experiential. The students can learn the practise very well by just following the instructions and 'imitating' the positions. As quoted by Natyashastra:

Yatho Hasta Thatho Drishti
Yatho Drishti Thatho Manah
Yatho Manah Thatho Baava
Yatho Baava Thatho Rasa

Translation:

Where the hands are, go the eyes;
Where the eyes are goes the mind;
Where the mind goes, there is an expression of inner feeling
And where there is inner feeling, mood or sentiment is evoked.



With this, the children can perform all the asanas taught during the yoga sessions and I've noted that all of them have the capacity, talent and strength to practice. I've trained many of my students to take part in the Malaysian International Yoga Competition (MIYC) and they have won many places in various categories. They are truly amazing!

I have also encountered many students who have experienced some positive breakthrough with the help of Yoga. Some of which I'd like to share with all of you:

1. A mother of a girl whom I teach at the Kajang school personally approached me say thanks as her daughter has built her self-confidence, flexibility and focus while practicing yoga asanas. Her father was finally convinced to enrol her for a classical dance class which the girl had been so longing to attend since a few years ago. Yoga asana has certainly given her the foundation she needed and complemented her other endeavours too.
2. A parent from a school in Melawati has also noted the changes in his son's academic results and social behaviour ever since the boy attended Yoga classes.
3. Diya Maria (not her real name) had menstrual cycle disorder and was undergoing treatment at a government hospital for the past 1 ½ years. She has now overcome her problem within six months of consistently practicing yoga.
4. A class teacher at Batu Caves school claimed that the students are more focused, calm, happy and disciplined since Yoga sessions were introduced in this school.

The examples are just the tip of the iceberg of how Yoga can benefit the practitioner. I hope more and more students will learn yoga and share it by teaching yoga to their friends and family members. Last but not least, gratitude is the sweetest of all the practices for living the dharma in daily life for it is most easily cultivated, and it requires the least sacrifice for what is gained in return. It is a very powerful form of mindfulness practice, particularly for students who have depression or self-defeating feelings, those whose minds have a tendency to wander, and those with a reactive personality that habitually notice everything that's wrong in a situation. **YM**

Inner Insights: Re-Discovering Yoga

by Yoko Yamada

Having lived in Malaysia for 18 years, I was a little apprehensive about joining Yoga in the beginning. This is because I always thought that Yoga is religious. The turning point came about 4 years ago when I enrolled into a Yoga class conducted in a gym where it was taught as a form of physical exercise. As I watched my passion for Yoga grew. I also noticed that I didn't have a strong foundation or understanding of the practice. This is probably due to the variety of styles offered in the gym yoga classes taught by instructors who were from various yoga schools. Soon enough I found myself confused by the variations.

I got acquainted with MAYI during the Malaysian International Yoga Competition (MIYC) 2011 where I was a participant. I was in awe of both the younger and elder participants whom have shown so much confidence, enthusiasm and passion in their practices. The following year, I participated again and emerged as a winner! With the winning prize, I enrolled myself into the International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course offered by MAYI. I have always considered taking up a certification course but never knew where to go. So this was really a dream come true for me! Attending the IYIC opened up my entire world to new possibilities and deepened my knowledge of Yoga. Through the course, I was very inspired when Master Mani clearly explained that Yoga is not a religion and that 'spirituality' doesn't necessarily have religious inclinations. It is about our personal development and transcendence.

I'm also very grateful to have the opportunity to learn other important Yoga related topics such as Shatkarma techniques, relaxation techniques, the importance of breathing and also other Yoga philosophies, which I would otherwise be unable to learn from a regular Yoga classes at the gym. With the added knowledge, the practice became more natural and purposeful. Another great insight I gained from the course is that being a yoga instructor doesn't necessarily mean that we need to be able to perform the asana perfectly before we can teach it as it is not a performance of physical flexibility or strength. More importantly, a yoga instructor should be knowledgeable and have thorough understanding on all the different aspects of Yoga practices and be able to instruct and guide their students well. I then proceeded to pursue the Intermediate and Advance levels of IYIC.

I also find it very inspiring that trainees are encouraged to give back to society by volunteering their services in the many community projects organised by the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS). Hence in 2013, I not only participated in the MIYC as a contender but as a volunteer as well. This gave me a very different perspective of what the yoga competition is about. I can see that as opposed to it appearing as a form of competitive sport (which it is not), it is a way to demonstrate to the general public that Yoga is for everyone and it focuses on the practitioner's general wellbeing. I was also surprised and elated to see so many trainees and graduates coming together, regardless of age, ethnicity and profession, uniting to make the event a successful one!



Through the IYIC training, I can see my knowledge of Yoga has multiplied with thanks to Master Mani's guidance. I'm grateful to have my world opened to the authentic Yoga teachings and to be given the opportunity to give back to society through the community projects. I am currently attending the Kundalini Kriya Yoga course which is excellent for self-development. I'm certain that with consistent practice of these wonderful techniques, I will be able to discover more innate potentials to further enhance my knowledge as a Yoga practitioner and instructor!
YM

CHARITABLE KIDS



Children are natural at showing empathy and compassion. If we observe closely, we can easily spot a little toddler comforting his crying friend, or a pre-schooler consoling her friend who fell down in the playground. Just as we take care to nurture their physical development, their innate sense of charity and compassion need to be nurtured as well. This is important as the ability to read social cues and to respond appropriately to them is important for children's social development.

It's a good idea to open the children's minds and let them know that there are people who are less fortunate compared to them. And at the same time, on the other end, there are also a huge charitable community who are always performing good deeds even to the people they do not know, and that they can be a part of this charitable community. Through these practices, they will learn to grow out of the 'Give me' and 'I want' mentality, and start to see themselves as a person who can help to make a difference in other people's lives. Naturally, this will further nurture the love and compassion from within.

Although the most common form of charity comes in the form of monetary and material gifts, it's vital for us to teach children that the most important part of charity is the genuine thoughts and intent, and the deeds that follow suit. Real charity is where one acts without being attached to the fruits of one's deeds. Teaching children about charity serves as a good way to impart treasured lessons such as gratitude, empathy, and citizenship. They learn to contribute and to give without expecting rewards, and to adopt a role in the society.

While we are encouraging children to do charity, remember to honour their opinions too. Charity has to come from the heart and never forced. If the child finds it hard to part with his toys or clothes, get creative and find other ways to contribute. Always involve children in the process and value their opinions. They will learn to be responsible and charitable at the same time!



DONATE ITEMS

Set aside time to go through your closets for clothes you have not worn for some time, stationeries which are piling up, and toys which are stacking up which can be given to the Salvation Army, or dropped into the recycling box. When selecting clothes or toys to be donated, explain to them that the items that they choose are not confined to old clothing or toys that they no longer want or need. Picking up something which is dear to them but understanding that others may need it more than they do strengthen the true meaning of charity.



NEIGHBOURLY HELP

Be pro-active in service-oriented community projects. Organise clean-up projects at the neighbourhood playground or park. Involve them in baking cakes and cookies to be brought to the event and show them how to bake something delicious yet nutritious.



SAVE AND DONATE

Encourage children to save some of their pocket money to be donated to the organisation of their choice. They can also choose to buy something meaningful for the children in need. Involve them in delivering the items.



HEALTH SHARE

In a group get-together or during visit to orphanages, allow your child to 'teach' other children Yoga and watch your child beam as he shares the wonderful health benefits! You'll be amaze that the little ones are great teachers too! Have them start the yoga session with a simple gesture of gratitude – create an energy ball from the great energy of the universe and dedicate it to everyone!



LOVELY WORDS

Make cards/notes with motivational quotes or praises and dedicate it to others. It can be dedicated to neighbours, or during a visit to the homes, orphanages or shelters for victims of natural disaster. This is also a great way for children to learn about being positive and supportive of others.



GREENING IT

Start planting more trees or plants around the house and the neighbourhood. Apart from beautifying the surrounding, the trees and plants are great assets for the environment too – we can help to freshen up the air!

SYK classes include: Yoga Kids Class, Teens Yoga Class, Family Yoga Class and Pregnancy Yoga Class. For more information about Super Yoga Kids, log on to www.superyogakids.com or find us at Facebook: SYK Superyogakids

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Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Quinoa with Moroccan Pumpkin and Carrot Stew



Ingredients

Stew

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion (optional)
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped (optional)
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons Hungarian sweet paprika [A]
- 1 teaspoon salt [A]
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper [A]
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander [A]
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin [A]
- ½ teaspoon turmeric [A]
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper [A]
- Pinch of saffron [A]
- 1 cup of water
- 6-8 diced tomatoes,
- Juice of 1 fresh lemon and zest from the skin
- 3 cups 1-inch cubes peeled butternut squash or pumpkin
- 2 cups 3/4 –inch cubes peeled carrots
- ½ cup chopped fresh coriander
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh mint

Quinoa

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 tablespooon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 2 cups water

Preparation

For stew:

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add onion and ginger and sauté until soft, stirring often, for about 5 minutes. Add garlic and stir for 1 minute.
3. Mix in paprika and ingredients listed in A. Add 1 cup water, diced tomatoes, and lemon juice. Bring to boil.
4. Add squash and carrots. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat until vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes.
5. Season with salt and pepper.

For quinoa-

1. Soak quinoa for 5 minutes to remove any bitterness. Rinse and drain completely.
2. Cook the quinoa in the rice cooker with 2 cups of water, olive oil, salt and turmeric, until light and fluffy

To serve

Spoon quinoa onto platter, forming well in center. Spoon stew into well. Sprinkle chopped coriander and mint and serve warm with yogurt on the side.

Schedule of Courses: OCT 2013 - MAR 2014

OCTOBER		
26/10/2013	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
26/10/2013	BSR	Self Mastery / Kundalini Kriya Yoga
26/10/2013	BFS	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
27/10/2013	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation course
27/10/2013	BSR	Anatomy & Physiology: The Body from Within

NOVEMBER		
3/11/2013	BSR	Partner with Precision: Movements with Awareness
13/11/2013	DU	Self Mastery
17/11/2013	BSR	Prana Vidya
23/11/2013	BSR	MAYI Graduation 2013

DECEMBER		
2-6/12/2013	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
9-11/12/2013	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
22/12/2013	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
22/12/2013	DU	Yoga Therapist Certification Course

JANUARY 2014		
3/1/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

FEBRUARY 2014		
1/2/2014	DU	Jala Neti Workshop
22/2/2014	BSR	Self Mastery / Kundalini Kriya Yoga
23/2/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
15-16/2/2014		Thaipusam - Day Trip
21/2/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
23/2/2014	BFS	Pregnancy Instructor Course

MARCH 2014		
2/3/2014	BFS	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
2/3/2014	BFS	Yoga Sharing Open Day
4 - 7/3/2014	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
16/3/2014	DU	Yoga Sharing Open Day
23/3/2014	BSR	Manipuraka Workshop
23/3/2014	BSR	Urdhva Retas Workshop
30/3/2014	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

BFS: Brickfields; BSR: Bangsar; DU: D'sara Uptown
**Subject to change without prior notice*

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**"We talk about centredness, we contemplate self realisation &
we write about enlightenment, but it can't solely come from theory.
It has to come from real change, through real tangible processes and experiences"**

~ Manisekaran ~

Commencing: 26 Oct 2013

Time: 3pm - 5pm

Venue: Bangsar

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