



CYF NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018

Happy New Year Yogis and Yoginis!

I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year and are now enjoying the gradual increase of the day as the light slowly returns to us.

We had an amazing year last year with 4 fantastic seminars, Trainees completing their training and new ones joining the course. This first year of the new committee has been a bedding in period and we are all still adjusting to our new roles and looking forward to carrying the CYF on into 2018. We have a great year planned for you and hope that you can join us at the seminars in February, June, July and October. Our Guest teacher in July will be Jay Rossi who will be joining us from Nottingham to guide us through a Kashmiri Yoga session. Jay is a lovely teacher who will lure you through a subtle energy practice. You will be Omazed. Make a date in your diary & invite your friends.

You may have noticed in your seminar notification that we are returning to a shared lunch so please remember to bring something veggie or vegan for a pot luck lunch.

Don't forget to let us know if you would like to present a seminar or have ideas for guest teachers & please send our editor all your lovely essays, favourite poems, recipes and news for our next newsletter

I hope to see you on the mat

Deb

**SEMINAR, TEACHER TRAINING AND
WORKSHOP SCHEDULE FOR 2018**

14 January, Workshop
The Chakras

4 February, Seminar

Katy Smith will lead the morning Hatha practice
Ros Phillips will lead a philosophical discussion on the
Gunas in the afternoon with Pranayama practice and
Relaxation to end the day
Venue:- Acton Church Hall

4 March, Teacher Training
Backbends

8 April, Workshop

Physiology and Pranayama 2

13 May, Teacher Training
Twists

3 June, Seminar

Lisa Russell will guide us through a morning Hatha
session
followed by a talk on Mindfulness and Yoga Nidra to
close the day
Venue:- Acton Church Hall

1 July, Extra Seminar Day

With guest, Jay Rossi who will introduce us to Kashmiri
Yoga

9 September

Extra Training Workshop - to be confirmed

7 October, Seminar

AGM and Gill Drummond
A practice of twists and triangles to cleanse and energise
Venue:- Acton Church Hall

4 November, Teacher Training
Balances

2 December, Workshop

Bandhas, Mudras, Kriyas and Mantra

It was agreed at the October seminar to re-instate the
"pot luck" lunches at future seminars. This gives us
all chance to share food along with conversation, so
we invite you to bring along something vegan or
vegetarian.

*If you are a qualified teacher and would like to lead a
seminar in the future, or have ideas of guest teachers,
please contact
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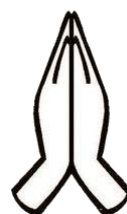
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*Thanks go to Kathryn Howard and Jane Bennett for
their contributions. They have both now "retired" from
their positions on the Committee.*



FACE YOGABREAKING NEWS

It's probably safe to assume that all the readers of this newsletter are already convinced of the benefits of yoga for the body, but yoga for the face?? A very recent study published in January 2018 in the journal "JAMA Dermatology" reports on the benefits of facial yoga following a study undertaken at the Northwestern University School of Medicine in Chicago.

The research claims that a 30-minute daily or alternate-day facial exercise programme sustained over 20 weeks improved the facial appearance of middle-aged women, resulting in a younger appearance with fuller upper and lower cheeks.

Dr Murad Alam, who led the research project states that "The exercises enlarge and strengthen the facial muscles, so the face becomes firmer and more toned and shaped like a younger face."

As the face ages, skin loses elasticity and fat pads between the muscle and skin become thinner. The fat pads, which fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, give the face much of its shape. As skin becomes saggy, the thinning fat pads atrophy and slide, causing the face to "fall down".

How the study worked

Study participants, middle-aged women aged 40 to 65, underwent two sets of face-to-face 90-minute training sessions from a facial exercise instructor. At home, they continued to do these exercises for a total of 20 weeks. For the first eight weeks, they did the exercises daily for 30 minutes. From weeks 9 - 20, they did the same exercises every other day for 30 minutes a session.

Study results

The primary outcome measure was assessment of standardized photographs before facial exercise compared to photographs after facial exercise by two dermatologists who assessed the photos using a standardized facial aging scale (Merz-Carruthers Facial Aging Photoscales) looking separately at 19 features of the face and rated all of those at three different time points: at the beginning, at week eight and at week 20.

If you're inspired to give it a try, then take a look at this link to yoga for the face by the calm and beautiful Ranjana Khan.

https://intothegloss.com/2013/07/face-yoga-with-ranjana-khan/?utm_source=youtube&utm_medium=video&utm_campaign=itg

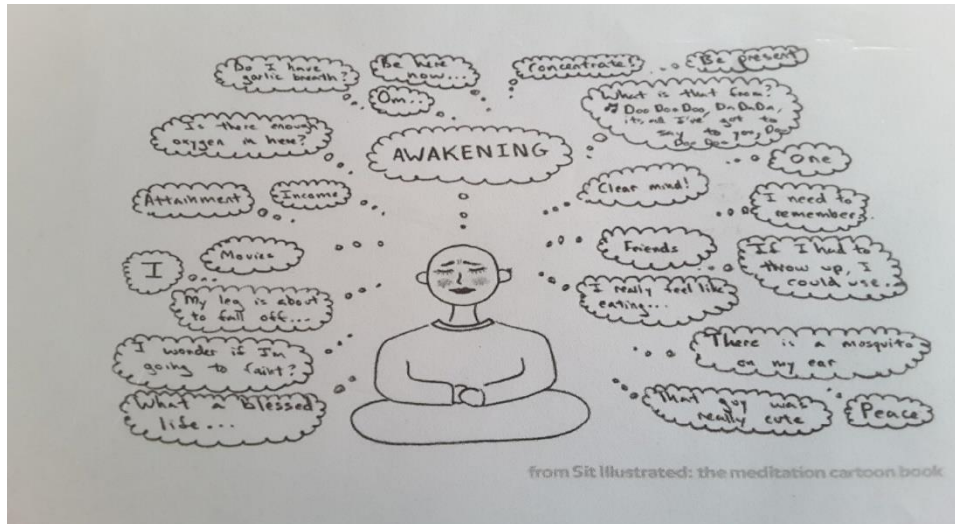
Here's the Editor's Challenge for this edition

Take a couple of "before" close-up photos, commit to regular face yoga exercises (there are many more out there to try if Ranjana Khan is not for you) and take some "after" photos. If you're feeling brave send both sets in for publication in the Summer edition of the newsletter.

MEDITATIONsubmitted by Joyce Watson

'Never be afraid to sit and think.' Lorraine Hansbury, A Raisin in the Sun'

How can it be so hard to still the mind and feel the benefits of regular meditation? The process seems so simple, and yet it can sometimes feel so hard to control the 'monkey mind'.



If we are starting a regular meditation practice, or introducing meditation to a class, I would make a plea to keep it simple and short.

Sit comfortably, either on the floor or in a chair, keeping the spine straight.

Keeping the eyes softly focussed for a moment, become aware of where your body makes contact with the chair or the mat.

How does your physical body feel? Are you feeling heaviness, or a sense of lightness? Are you warm or cold?

Notice how you feeling emotionally.....happy or sad? Anxious or relaxed? Just observe, and don't judge yourself or seek to change anything.

Be aware of the sounds in the room. Notice your surroundings, what you can see through the window or in the room.

Now, draw you attention to the breath. Just notice it coming and going, and the movement it creates in the body.

Then breathe in, and, as you exhale, gently close the eyes.

Begin to enjoy the feeling of sitting quietly and notice how your breathing has become very gentle.

Start to observe your thoughts. Try not to engage with any train of thought, but simply watch each thought moving past you, as cars along a busy road.

Simply sit. If it is difficult not to follow your thoughts, just return your attention to the breath.

After a few minutes, become aware of your physical body. Listen to the sounds around you, then take a moment to ask yourself how you feel now....

Open your eyes. Gently engage with your surroundings again.

We are much more likely to practice meditation regularly if keep it short initially, and recognise any positive difference it is making to our daily life. So remember to take time to acknowledge the benefits and ENJOY!

Girl Talk. Shakti, The Divine Feminine

*By you this universe is borne,
By you this world is created,
Oh Devi, by you it is protected.*



Everything is said to be a manifestation of the union of shiva and shakti, masculine and feminine. This feminine energy is Shakti and, in the Indian tradition comes under many guises each relating to an aspect of life, personality and human needs. She is the gentle consort of Shiva, the earth mother or riding a tiger as Durga in battle or in anger as Kali. This energy is powerful and necessary. Without Shakti, Shiva is simply Shava...corpse. We are all united Shiva and Shakti but when we get in touch with that shakti energy we can be in for an ecstatic ride.

As in many traditions the Indian Hindu tradition which is the foundation of yoga believes that everything is created from Divine Feminine Energy known as Shakti. Everything contains Prana Shakti. In Tantrika the aim is to teach the body its own divinity, recognising that goddess energy is within every cell of our body yet we often forget and ignore this especially on our yoga mats. Yoga is one of the greatest tools of svadhyaya/self study that we have been given but the asana practice is predominately designed with a male body in mind and as women we get caught up in the precision of trying to find a perfect pose, regardless of if it is appropriate for our body at that time. Yoga should enhance our life but it won't if we do not honour the sacred ground of our body. In a world where body image still dominates our media, where striving to be the best at work, the best mum, the best wife, we ignore our cycles and even stop them by use of the pill. We ignore the seasons of our body and in our crazy rush of daily life, ignore nourishing. When come to our mat we often continue this by ignoring the fact that we are menstruating or ovulating or menopausal or just plain depleted. So when our yoga teacher says let's do Kapalabhati or lift into headstand we just do. We forget to listen to the story our body and breath are telling us. This powerful energy is within us and if we pause & listen, if we respect it and honour it we tune into our natural flow and begin to untangle the knots of our life, discovering the radiant goddess that is our true self.

According to the ancient texts Lord Shiva's wife, Parvati asked him to teach her yoga and told him to devise the system of asana so that the world could learn it. Shiva then went on to devise 84 asanas/poses, most of which us mere mortals couldn't do. Angela Farmer, a pioneer in women's yoga has a different story.

Parvati, Shiva's wife was very beautiful. She loved her life and she had a bath made from a shell in which she would bathe. She would rub sandalwood paste onto her body and would stretch out in the morning

sunshine. It was delicious and she would twist her body one way and bend it that way and then lean over a sofa and just breathe. It felt good.

Siva loved his wife madly. He would often sneak behind a pillar and watch his wife in admiration. After a while he thought, 'maybe I could move like this'. He watched her carefully and went out to the jungle to try for himself. He began to perfect them, codify them and practiced very hard to get it right. When some of his devotees saw his practice they asked him to teach them yoga. 'Very well,' he said, 'line up, jump three feet apart, left foot in, right foot out, stretch your arms out! More, more, more!' Crash Bang!. He trained them and sent them out in the world to start ashrams and spread the practice of yoga.

Meanwhile Parvati is still at home, stretching and undulating led by her breath.

Goddess energy:

We can relate to different goddess energy during different times in our lives.

Kali in times of change and when we need to cut out of our life things that no longer serve us. Kali means time and time and change are intrinsic to our cycles and seasons. In her closeness to death and darkness she shows us how to accept change and willingness to let go.

Lakshmi for times of abundance, creative energy & sustainability.

Or Kamalatmika the goddess of delight and feminine sexuality

Matangi creative expression

Bhuvaneshvari in pregnancy, birth and loss. Nourishing the golden womb

Parvati, gentle consort of Shiva, wife and mother and creative energy. When all else failed to bring Shiva out of meditation and back into the world (he was needed to keep the balance) Parvati was the one to succeed by matching him and being stubborn. As Shiva destroys, Parvati creates. She is also linked to romance.

Radha for romantic longing and powerful sustainable love

Bhairavi for embracing our power.

Dhumavati for living our wisdom

We could go on and on but they are notes for further workshops. Today we will explore MahaShakti The Goddess who is all that is, of eternal power.

BASIC RULES OF THUMB for our practice during our cycles.

We need to listen to our bodies and judge for ourselves if we are nourishing or depleting ourselves with our practice. A basic rule though is that when we are menstruating, pregnant, post natal and breast feeding we should avoid kapalabhati & Bhastrika (pumping breaths), bandhas, inversions and fast or hot asana practice. Choose gentler forms of pranayama (breathing practices) without held breaths, fluid & restorative practices and yoga nidra.

Similar rules apply when we are premenopausal and menopause but we may find that on some days we need a faster asana practice or the use of kapalabhati and bandhas.

The Invitation

by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living
I want to know what you ache for
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's
longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool
for love
for your dreams
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your
moon...
I want to know if you have touched the center of your
own sorrow
if you have been opened by life's betrayals
or have become shrivelled and closed
from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy
mine or your own
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your
fingers and toes
without cautioning us to
be careful
be realistic
to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me
is true.
I want to know if you can
disappoint another
to be true to yourself.

If you can bear the accusation of betrayal
and not betray your own soul.
If you can be faithless
and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty
every day.
And if you can source your own life
from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure
yours and mine
and still stand on the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
"Yes."

It doesn't interest me
to know where you live or how much money
you have.
I want to know if you can get up
after a night of grief and despair
weary and bruised to the bone
and do what needs to be done
to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know
or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the center of the fire
with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with
whom
you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you
from the inside
when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone
with yourself
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.

A light-hearted article from Gill Drummond about the ongoing battle with her spell checker whilst she was studying for the Anatomy and Physiology section of the course.....

'Assault and Battery on the Human Anatomy'

Being a music fan I couldn't resist stealing the title for this section from the band Hawkwind.
Sorry, that goes against Asteya!

Virasana → Verrazano (don't mix up Vira with an Italian explorer – the result may be war)

Adho → Ahoy... come on, playing pirates and mermaids on your yoga blocks is the stuff of
"children's yoga" (my grand-daughter loves it)

Mukha → Mocha or muck – too much coffee goes against ahimsa. As does muck!
Fed up of fighting the spell-checker, I decided to add this word to the spell-checker's vocabulary.
Due to the touch of Scouse in my accent I think of the pronunciation as 'Mur-Ka' so it took me a
long time to spell to learn to spell Mukha correctly.
See how the pose Adho Mukha Virasana just sends the spell-check crazy!

Hatha→ Hither... come hither to your yoga class!

Sattvic → not Static, or attic (a large attic could make a nice yoga space)

Prasarita – Parasite... (I don't like creepy crawlies)

Shakti → not shakey

Krama → Karma: don't let spell checker mix this one up... am I getting Karma from the computer
for using all of these yoga terms??

Chaturanga Dandasana → chattering Dundesian... you can't talk about anything when learning or
trying this pose, try not to curse as you fall to earth from attempting this pose!

My new laptop had even weirder ideas:

Svanasana →Savannah... Swansea...

Uttanasana → Euthanasia... that really is bad

Apanasana Pranayama (hey... it's into yoga after all)

For most other poses and terms, the spell check just didn't have a clue what to suggest as
alternatives!

From the song "Assault and Battery" from Hawkwind's album Warrior on the Edge of Time;
words by Dave Brock.

Namaste and Om Shanti.... Gill Drummond

An essay written by Rosalind Phillips, describing her views on Diet and Hygiene

“I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants” Gandhi

“Every herb bearing seed.... and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you they shall be for meat” Genesis 1.29

In Western Societies, for all the following reasons we have problems associated with our relationship with food. We have an overabundance of choice, with food imported from all over the globe so we have lost touch with the seasonal availability when food tastes at its best. We lead sedentary lifestyles where increasingly less physical demands are placed on the body from our work or our general mobility. We are bombarded with emotionally charged advertising to do with food and at the same time have distorted ideas from the fashion and diet industry regarding our body image. Food additives, added sugar, salt, fats and processing have removed the natural tastes and our palettes have become jaded and blunted. We rely on the fast food industry and ready cooked meals because we have lost the ability and time to prepare meals from raw ingredients. Children no longer have the right to play and exercise, and therefore there is an imbalance between calorific input and expenditure. There also exists in the West an excess of food itself and the food industry through its production of profit laden, high calorie, low nutrition foods which encourage us to over consume in our buying and eating habits. (The diet industry also sets us up to fail to ensure a come back mechanism). For these reasons and others, eating disorders are increasingly common. Even when there is no apparent eating disorder, an unhealthy diet in childhood is storing up trouble in terms of cardio vascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and other diseases.

We also have an obsession with protein and the need to derive this from an animal source. I think this partly arises from the shortage of food during the World War II, as well as an historical lack of imagination in the British culinary culture, and class snobbery (the association of poverty and low social status with a low meat diet), as well as tradition, prevailing agricultural practices and our climate.

I understand that there is currently a scientific argument to the affect that Homo Sapiens developed our large brain capacity - so giving rise to the development of language - as a result of a transition from a vegetarian to a meat eating society (the growth arising from the alleged extra protein), and that we therefore need animal protein to enhance our cognitive powers. I have looked briefly for the evidence and it would appear that “Quality diet” is “of course” equated with meat eating.

I like the following argument to explain our large brain size which is that it is an evolutionary adaptation arising from the need for the very extensive period of child rearing in the human race and the role of the matriarch (grandmother) in this. Older women are needed for their experience, skills and availability in the supervision of the next generation, and we need the extra large brain capacity because the rapid rate of decline of brain cells. This appeals as although not a grandmother, I am already experiencing those senior moments, and it also helps explain why women live longer!

In this essay I am indebted to “The Higher Taste - A Guide to Gourmet vegetarian Cooking and Karma-Free Diet” The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust for many of the scientific facts and quotes I have used. I’m afraid I have not given all the references from which they are derived.

Although we are adapted to be omnivores, most parts of our anatomy bear a greater resemblance to herbivores than carnivores. We do not possess sharp, flesh tearing front teeth, claws, strongly acidic digestive juices, nor short alimentary canals designed for quick elimination. Nor can we deal with animal fat and cholesterol in the same unlimited amounts as for example dogs. Research going back to the 1960’s has shown a link between diets high in saturated fat and coronary heart disease. Trans fats derived from hydrogenated vegetable fats are also lethal in terms of heart disease. There is a long established link between colon cancer and meat eating, due to the slow transit of low fibre, high fat and toxins. The preservatives in meat interact with chemicals such as amines found in beer, wine, tea and tobacco to form nitrosamines which are highly carcinogenic. Other unnatural chemicals are introduced into the food chain through the administration of tranquilizers, hormones, antibiotics and other drugs to animals not to mention the feeding of unnatural high protein diets, and the chemicals added after slaughter. Furthermore the pain and fear engendered produces “pain Poisons” such as excess adrenalin which can have an unnaturally stimulating effect.

An excess of animal protein can lead to a strain on the kidneys and produces an excess of urea and acidity in the body which can lead to a build up of lactic acid in the joints and muscles causing stiffness. In other words a lack of flexibility is associated with a meat eating diet.

There are many sources of protein in nonflesh foods, such as dairy products, grains, beans and nuts, as well as some vegetables. There are twenty two amino acids required for growth and tissue replacement of which only eight cannot be produced directly from the body. These can be produced by vegetarian foods especially when combined as in grain with nut or pulse.

As a meat dominated society large areas of virgin land need to be turned over to grain production whereas a diet of grains, vegetable and beans will support twenty times more people than a diet of meat, and one acre of grain will produce five times more protein than an acre of pasture set aside for meat production. The figures for beans or peas and for spinach are ten and twenty eight times (than an acre of a pasture). Taken to its logical conclusion it is possible to argue that hunger could easily be eliminated if food production changed - or even that there is already sufficient food to feed the planet, if we take into account the waste generated by the butter mountain etc. and our own and the supermarkets throw-away habits, and over-consumption.

Throughout history great thinkers have advocated a vegetarian diet. I will quote several as they each in themselves provide a compelling reason for abstinence from meat, as well as reminding us although in a minority, vegetarians or aspiring veggies have a lot of first class role models to look up to.

Socrates recommended it on the grounds of agricultural economy. Thoreau - a flexitarian - wrote "I have not doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals".

Pythagoras said "Oh, my fellow men, do not defile your bodies with sinful foods. We have corn, we have apples bending down the branches with their weight and grapes swelling on the vines. There are sweet-flavoured herbs, and vegetables which can be cooked and softened over the fire, nor are you denied milk or thyme-scented honey. The earth affords a lavish supply of riches, of innocent foods, and offers you banquets that involve not bloodshed or slaughter; only beasts satisfy their hunger with flesh, and not even all of those, because horse, cattle, and sheep live on grass". Pythagoras ate bread and honey in the morning and raw vegetables at night. He would also pay fishermen to throw their catch back into the sea.

Plutarch wrote "Can you really ask what reason Pythagoras had for abstinence from flesh? For my part I rather wonder both by what accident and in what state of mind the first man touched his mouth to gore and brought his lips of the flesh of a dead creature, set forth tables of dead, stale bodies, and ventured to call food and nourishment the parts that had a little before bellowed and cried, moved and lived.... It is certainly not lions or wolves that we eat out of self-defence, on the contrary, we ignore these and slaughter harmless, tame creature without stings or teeth to harm us... If you declare that you are naturally designed for such a diet, then first kill for yourself what you want to eat. Do it, however, only through your own resources, unaided by cleaver or cudgel or any kind of an axe."

Leonardo wrote "He who does not value life does not deserve it", and considered the bodies of meat eaters to be "burial places". Drawing a parallel with the animal kingdom, Rousseau put forward the view that vegetarians were less violent than meat eaters, suggesting that butchers should not sit on juries. Adam Smith: "It may indeed be doubted whether butchers' meat is anywhere a necessary of life." Benjamin Franklin described meat as unprovoked murder. The poet Shelly subscribed to Plutarch's views, Leo Tolstoy declared meat eating to be immoral, and the composer Richard Wagner believed that all life was sacred. Mohandas Gandhi wrote five books on vegetarianism and founded a community based on its principles.

The playwright George Bernard Shaw became a vegetarian at the age of 25. As an old man he remarked that his meat eating friends had long since died, and when asked how he looked so young he replied: "I don't. I look my age. It is the other people who look older than they are. What can you expect from people who eat corpses?" I personally have also found this to be true of many people I know or have met.

I tend to take the view that individuals vary a lot in their constitutional, bio-chemical and possibly spiritual requirements with regard to food. As a child I was myself an instinctive vegetarian especially hating even the thought of eating undercooked red meat, and later in life have found out that I am a carrier for inherited haemochromatosis - (an illness based on inability to metabolize iron). However I have not been a lifelong veggie, being made to eat small amounts of meat as a child, and later became so sick of being asked "Why don't you eat meat?" (To which there is no real answer as although the real question might be "why do you eat meat" the fact that it has been posed means that the questioner is incapable of understanding the answer), I became socialized into meat eating as a teenager. In my adult life I have been predominantly veggie, however I regard there is as much cruelty in the dairy business and an excess of cheese and pulses does not suit my digestion, but I am a great fan of nuts! I have also found that it can cause offence to refuse meat.

With regard to individual differences, I have found that my own children vary a lot in their tastes, e.g. one will have salt but no vinegar, one vinegar but no salt, the other two both (on chips!), one is staunch meat eater, the other three are predominantly veggie. Having been brought up in a meat eating household with no choice, I have tended to feed my family a la carte, pandering perhaps a bit too much to faddiness. Whilst we all vary, it is also true that as humans we seem able to cope with a very broad spectrum of food - considering for example that an Inuit might have lived a life time on a diet of seafood. Having said this, in the U.S I understand there is a new area of nutrition called nutrigenetics which looks at how your genes affect the way you respond to certain foods and dietary regimes.

Another problem associated with food is that is sometimes hard to differentiate what foods are healthy and which not given our background conditioning - e.g. in the 50's and 60's carbs were "bad", in the 70's and 80's we went low fat, then high protein, and more recently low GI. In actual fact the Yoga and Vendanta philosophy gives a very sensible perspective on food and diet, and increasingly medical recommendations for certain conditions correspond. Generally

speaking, most modern dieticians now emphasize fresh, unprocessed natural foods such as organic fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, pulses, wholegrain etc., meat only in very small quantities or not at all. There is debate about the importance of oily fish (does pollution offset the benefits of Omega 3's and 6's which can be obtained from linseed and flax) and dairy (even organic can be high in oestrogen which may play a role in breast cancer). Low GI (glycaemic Index) is just another way of eating unprocessed foods - an excess of refined sugar requiring the constant production of insulin, being a predisposing factor in the development of diabetes.

The yogic approach recommends foods which are as un-denatured as possible, which are sattvic, and which promote ahimsa (non harming and the sanctity of all living creatures). This accords with the organic view which does not harm the environment, and the importance of local production - avoidance of food miles. Plant based foods derive their energy directly from the sun, unlike meat - first, rather second hand goodness, containing more prana. Sattvic foods - which correspond to the principle of purity and light - are those already mentioned as part of a veggie diet and also include herbal teas, fruit juices, cold pressed oils and natural sweeteners. The principle of Rajas - associated with movement, change and passion - is found in hot, bitter, sour, dry or salty foods which are to be avoided - e.g. hot spices, strong herbs, caffeine, fish, eggs and chocolate. The principle of Tamas - inertia, darkness - is found in stale, overripe, or fermented foods such as mushrooms, alcohol, onions, garlic, and garlic. Raw food is often more wholesome and energy giving than cooked. A study which looked at the standard diet of a Japanese Prisoner of War camp concluded that a raw version of the diet was capable of sustaining life indefinitely whereas the cooked version would cause malnutrition and starvation.

However, it is often difficult to stick to these principles, and ayurveda would tell us that our different dosha or constitutional type will dictate to some extent the proportion of the "guna" in our diet. Furthermore it may be that our preferences will alter according to our personal development. And some people, me included find it difficult to resist certain tempting but not so healthy foods such as chocolate, crisps and pastries.

The sattvic approach also accords with the niyama of Saucha - of purity or cleanliness of body and mind - "By the purity of food, follows the purification of the inner nature" Swami Sivananda.

The Yogic diet recommends moderation suggesting that the stomach should be filled to satiety but partially empty for the purposes of digestion. (Solid food should fill half the stomach, liquids one quarter). This accords with the yama of aparigraha the principle of non greediness or non covetousness.

A balanced and varied diet of unprocessed natural predominantly plant based foods will generally ensure that the requirements for proteins, essential fatty acids, and vitamins and minerals are met. There is now a new class of foods called "super foods" the top ten of which are said to be blueberries, Water, prunes, salmon, broccoli, beans/lentils, pomegranates, avocado, green tea and Yogurt. (Ten Years Younger Nutrition bible, Nicky Hambleton-Jones.)

As regards hygiene, the same principles of purity as in cleanliness are recommended as part of healthy lifestyle. Balance as in not becoming excessive or compulsive with regard to regimes of cleanliness is important. How an individual chooses to keep themselves clean is a matter of personal choice.

Bibliography

The Higher Taste

The New Book of Yoga - Sivananda Yoga Centre

10 Years Younger - N. Hambleton-Jones

Health Through Yoga - Mira Mehta

You are what you eat - Gillian McKeith

FINANCE CORNER

This is a new feature aimed to help with business / financial / tax issues and is written by Gill Drummond AIAB, our CYF Treasurer.

If you are self-employed please don't forget to file your 2016-17 tax return online by 31 January 2018.

The HMRC website gets really slow just before deadlines like this, so it's advisable to submit as soon as you can – don't leave it to the last minute!
Tax needn't be taxing... Don't let tax turn your life upside down!



HMRC Trading Allowance

From April 2017 there is a £1,000 "Property and Trading Income Allowance" - in HMRC's own words: "The government announced at Budget 2016 the introduction of a £1000 allowance for property income and a £1000 allowance for trading income from the 2017 to 2018 tax year. The new allowances will mean that individuals with property income below £1000 or trading income below £1000 will no longer need to declare or pay tax on that income. Those with income above the allowance will be able to calculate their taxable profit either by deducting their expenses in the normal way or by simply deducting the relevant allowance from their gross income. Legislation will be introduced in Finance Bill 2017."

We've confirmed with HMRC that you have no obligation to register as Self Employed if your business turnover is less than £1,000 a year - this probably won't help Yoga Teachers with regular classes, as it's only £20 a week - but if you just do a few covers or teach a single class for expenses only it may take you outside of tax. It may also give you a year's grace if you start teaching part way through a tax year, e.g. January.

Of more interest is that if your turnover is more than £1,000 a year, you can deduct the greater of £1,000 or your actual expenses. If you don't have a large amount of expenses, this £1,000 minimum may be of interest. This applies to sole traders only, not partnerships and companies.

These new rules apply for the 17/18 tax year onwards.

Source: Yoga Tax, a part of Whitefield Tax Ltd: www.yogatax.co.uk

Another essay by Rosalind Phillips, written in 2003, edited 2012

Explain briefly the nature and purpose of mantras and comment on the sacred syllable Aum

Mantras are Sanskrit syllable phrases or verses which are generally repeated over and over. "Man" means to think and "tra" means tool or instrument of protection or control. Other words which can convey the meaning of mantra are positive affirmation, hymn, sacred sound, poem, vibration and perhaps spell.

A mantra provides a focus for attention for the mind, which by correct and continuous use, can become of form of meditation.

Mantras originated in Vedic Hinduism and were later adopted by Buddhist and Jains. In some ways they may seem alien to western cultures which traditionally invest more in the power of the written word (such as the Hebrew Kabala), but historically the written word is less powerful than the spoken in India.

In Hindu tantras the universe *is* sound. "Creation consists of the vibrations at various frequencies and amplitudes giving rise to the phenomena of the world". ("Mantra" from Wikipedia). A definition of sound, which in vedantic traditions is considered one of the most important principles of existence, is given in Srimad Bhagavatam (3, 26.33) as

"Persons who are learned and who have true knowledge define sound as that which conveys the idea of an object, indicates the presence of a speaker, and constitutes the subtle form of ether".

Sound is both the source of matter and the key to becoming free to it, likened to a thread between the material and spiritual worlds.

The idea that sound is the means through which universal consciousness becomes matter is perhaps not so very different from modern string theory. In string theory, it is held that everything in the universe is made up of tiny identical vibrating strings whose only difference is the pattern of resonance. (Yoga Cyf journal journal 2005 Mantras by Jane Dibben.

The idea of repetitive sounds affecting the mind or consciousness is universal e.g. drumming and chanting. Compare the difference in power between the sound of a choir in St Pauls Cathedral, and a group of drunken youths or the singing of a lullaby with the shouting of a sergeant.

Japa or mantra repetition is an important part of Bhakti Yoga, the Yoga of devotion. "The principle of bhakti is that the things we love and dwell upon we become" (Ernest Wood in Yoga, Penguin Books 1959.). Mantra Japa involves the repetition of mantra in auspicious numbers (e.g. $3 \times 36 = 108$ which corresponds to the number of beads in a mandala necklace).

In Sivananda yoga sound is defined as energy made up of vibrations or wavelengths, some with the power to heal, some with power to shatter. The goal is to bring the individual to a higher state of consciousness. Mantras are traditionally revealed to and handed on by teacher or sage, and given at the time the teachers what the student needs. (It is held in some traditions that the mantra will not work in long term other wise.)

Mantras are sometimes given with an image to visualize. It is usually said that there is a need for the student to be aware of the meaning, and that are not to be used indiscriminately. The individual's culture and tradition must be understood. In other works the meaning and purpose depend on the contexts and the individual – Om or Aum can mean different things to a Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist (the above is indebted to Deschichar, Heart of Yoga).

Mantras allow concentration by blocking out other sensation, but are also said to release energy or prana associated with that particular sound. This presupposes that they are said with the correct pronunciation (although not all schools of Yoga would hold that this is necessary). However at the point at which the sound vibration merges with the thought vibration the mind goes beyond, reaching a state of non duality with no awareness of meaning.

The Sanskrit alphabet is composed of 50 primeval sounds which are known as Bija or seed mantras, they are said to be associated with the chakras, the stimulation of which is not said to be suitable for beginners.

"Seguna" mantras invoke specific aspects of the Absolute corresponding to different deities, while the "nirguna" mantras are more abstract and invoke identification with the Absolute.

Mantras are not meant to stimulate the imagination or give rise to a chain of thought. Mary Stewart in "Teach Yourself Yoga" gives this caution:

"Any practice based on ambition or the search for esoteric experience is a journey into the realms of the imagination and can therefore be a pathway to psychosis rather than to integration"

James Hewitt in "The complete Yoga Book" mentions that the use of hymns in Bhakti yoga can be taken too far, leading to mass hysteria or possession "when not tempered by detachment and intellectual discrimination".

This is not to say however that mantras can not have a profound healing effect. The vibration given by the different sounds within the mantra corresponds to different areas of part of the body.

HRAM (rhyming with clam) is said to be healing of Asthma and bronchitis (Ted Lovett, Cyf manual) "H" is said to purify and invigorate the heart and windpipe, "RA" drives out toxins from the mouth, "M" closes the door. The long vowel "A" strengthens the rib cage and purges the alimentary canal of toxins". Further examples are given on page 49.

Mantras can be multi layered in their symbolism, the best example, the best example of this is AUM, the most well known.

Aum is the most basic mantra and the source of all mantras, according to Vedic philosophy. This supposes that all things in the universe have name and form of some sort. Aum is the primordial vibration, the first "name form" of all, the unmanifest reality/unreality or Brahman (or Ishvara or God depending on your tradition!).

Aum is said to derive from the same root as the Latin Omne as in omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient.

A further translation of Om is "the immanence of the transcendental"

The upper curve of the form which looks like a "3" represents the "A",

The lower curve represents the "U",

The wave shape to the right represents the "M" and the dot with curved line underneath represent the resonance.



I have included a table showing the many layers of symbolism associated with Aum. Most importantly it also stands for creation (a), preservation, continuity and connection (u), and dissolution or the end of the universe (m), and the final part is that which goes before, beyond and after, that which can be expressed in words but also that which cannot, (the resonance). There are at least eight different ways of interpreting the symbol.

In sounding the work, a deep inhale is made first and the first part, A, is sounded from the abdomen, corresponding to lower chest out breath, with a slow retraction of the abdominal muscles, with an open throat and mouth. (A is the first letter of many alphabets, and stands for creation). The U, pronounced "oo", is sounded in the middle of the mouth with the resonance emitting from the chest, i.e. a thoracic or middle chest/intercostal out breath, (standing for continuance and renewal). The M is sounded with the mouth closed, with the vibration felt in the mouth, using the upper/clavicular out breath (end and dissolution). The vibration of all three sounds is experienced higher in the sinus area. Making the sound of A to M through to U represents all the sounds that can be made (as we travel from any given consonant, we have to travel through one of these vowels.)

According to TKV Desikachar in "The Heart of Yoga" a distinction is to be made between the Yoga Aum and the Sanskrit or Hindu Aum in the way the symbol is represented. However I cannot find an example on the internet. One has to be mindful that a symbol taken out of context may give offence.

The subject of mantras is therefore fascinating area covering the healing power and science of sound, and all encompassing in its range of reference and interpretation. Some of these areas are not generally very well understood or practiced outside of the Indian culture, but we could perhaps benefit more from their protective power.

From Mundakapanisad: "Taking as a bow the great weapon of the Upanishad, one should put upon it an arrow sharpened by mediation. Stretching it with a thought directed to the essence of that, penetrate the imperishable as the mark, my friend. The mystic syllable Aum is the bow. The arrow is the Self (atman). Brahman is the target. By the undistracted man is it penetrated. One should come to be in It, as the arrow in the mark"

	Meditation	Consciousness	Time	Mind	Learning	Dimension	Gunas	Other
A	Withdrawal of mind from sense objects - pratyahara	Waking state	Past - to help us learn	Manas, conscious	Formative – derived from parents, sense of right and wrong	Height	Tamas – darkness, inertia	Speech
U	Concentration on object or one pointedness - dharana	Dream state	Present – mindfulness and practical	Subconscious	Derived from teachers	Breadth	Rajas – light and shadow, positive and negative	Thinking Process
M	Absorption through contemplation, dhyana	Dreamless sleep	Future – to persevere for the best	The levels of instinct, unconscious	Personal effort	Length	Sattva – pure light, equilibrium	Prana
All 3	Samadhi	Samadhi or ishvara the one who never sleeps or dreams	Infinity	Supra-Consciousness	Intuition	Volume, Depth	Gunatita – transcendence	Crescent Atman Dot Source

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The Sivananda Yoga Centre: the New Book of Yoga

CYF Teacher Training Manual

Swami Shivaprmananda: Categories of OM in Yoga and Health September 2002

Cristina Brown: The Book of Yoga

Mary Stewart: Teach yourself Yoga

BKS Iyengar: Light on Yoga

TEACHER TRAINING NEWS

Congratulations to our 3 newly qualified teachers

Alan Paddick, Alison Farrall & Jane Bennett

Alan was presented with his certificate at the October Seminar



Crowd Pleasing Tex-Mex Casserole

This tasty vegan recipe from Angela Liddon's 'Oh She Glows' book is free from gluten, nuts, soy and sugar and is packed full of healthy veg. Similar to a burrito in a bowl, this casserole is the perfect mix of flavour and comfort.

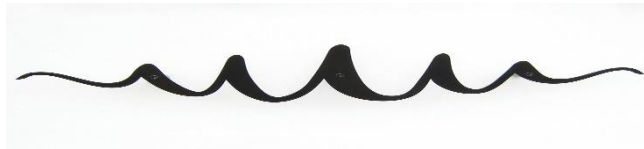


Ingredients

For the tex-mex spice blend:	For the casserole:
1 tbsp chilli powder	1 ½ tsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 ½ tsp ground cumin	1 red onion, sliced
1 tsp smoked sweet paprika, or ½ teaspoon regular paprika	3 garlic cloves, minced
¼ tsp cayenne pepper, plus more as needed	1 orange bell pepper, diced
1 ¾ tsp fine-grain sea salt	1 red bell pepper, diced
¼ tsp ground coriander (optional)	1 jalapeño, seeded, if desired, and diced
	fine-grain sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
	90 g fresh or frozen corn
	1 396g can diced tomatoes, with their juices
	250 ml tomato juice or tomato puree
	120 to 200g g chopped kale leaves or baby spinach
	1 425g can black beans, drained and rinsed
	500g g cooked wild rice blend or brown rice
	50 g vegan shredded cheese, such as Daiya
	1 to 2 handfuls corn tortilla chips, crushed
	optional toppings: sliced green onions, salsa, avocado, corn chips, cashew cream

Method

- Make the Tex-Mex Spice Blend: In a small bowl, combine the chilli powder, cumin, paprika, cayenne, salt, and coriander (if using). Set aside.
- Make the Casserole: Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F). Oil a large 5-litre casserole dish.
- In a large wok, heat the oil over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, bell peppers, and jalapeno and saute for 7 to 8 minutes, until softened. Season with salt and black pepper.
- Stir in the Tex-Mex Spice Blend, corn, diced tomatoes and their juices, tomato sauce, kale, beans, rice, and 25g of the vegan shredded cheese. Saute for a few minutes and season with more salt and black pepper, if desired.
- Pour the mixture into the prepared casserole dish and smooth out the top. Sprinkle the crushed chips over the casserole mixture along with the remaining cheese. Cover with a lid or foil and bake for 15 minutes.
- Uncover the casserole dish and cook for 5 to 10 minutes more, until bubbly and lightly golden around the edges.
- Scoop the casserole into bowls and add your desired toppings.
- Tip: Cook the rice ahead of time to make this recipe come together much faster. You can even use precooked frozen rice (just thaw it before using).



To help the environment and our funds, would you consider receiving a cheery, colourful copy of our CYF newsletter digitally?
If so, please get in touch.

Feedback on the newsletter is very welcome.
To contribute to the next edition, please send your favourite articles, poems, recipes and news to
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