



*Hope This Meets You  
— in Good Health —*

*The Newsletter of the ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry  
Issue No. 10 / 2004*

## Message from the Minister

RECENTLY, MANY SENIOR devotees have left their bodies, while others have serious diseases. Very few of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saravasti's initiated disciples are still on this planet, and soon the same will be said of Srila Prabhupada's initiated disciples. The inexorable laws of birth, death, old age, and disease cannot be changed even by austerities as severe as Hiranyakasipu's.

Still, as long as we are in a material body, we can strive to live in the mode of goodness and to act in accordance with the laws of nature. In order to best engage in devotional service, we can learn how to discriminate between what is healthy and what is not. Although we cannot change the body's ultimate destination, we should avoid unnecessary problems. By safe conduct on the road of life, let us try to make our spiritual journeys as smooth as possible.

— Prahladananda Swami

*Front cover: Lord Sri Krishna embraces a calf. He is the protector of the cows, and thus is known as Govinda and Goplala.*

## Disclaimer

- The articles in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the Health and Welfare Ministry.
- This magazine is not intended to treat, diagnose, or prescribe.
- The information contained herein is in no way to be considered as a substitute for consultation with a duly licensed health-care professional.

## Credits

### Editors

His Holiness  
Prahlananda Swami  
Tattvavit Dasa  
Taraka Devi Dasi  
Kancana-valli Devi Dasi  
Rupa Sanatana Dasa

### Layout

Yadurani Devi Dasi

### Subscriptions

Sivananda Dasa  
Bhaktin Linda



# Hope This Meets You — in Good Health —

The Newsletter of the ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry

Issue No. 10 / 2004

- 3 **Quotes from the Previous Acaryas**
- 4 **Prakrti: Ayurvedic Singularity**  
— Kaviraja Nimai Nitaidasa
- 9 **Rules for Enlightenment and Happiness:  
Yama & Niyama**  
— Prahladananda Swami
- 12 **Ayurvedic Treatment: A Personal Experience**  
— Kancana-valli Devi Dasi
- 14 **Herbal Help**  
— Raga Manjari Devi Dasi and Rama Prasad
- 17 **News**

## Subscriptions

The subscription cost for two issues of this newsletter is US\$7.50. Please send, along with your name and address, a money order in US dollars to the ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry.  
*The Ministry's mailing address is:*

### ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry

c/o ISKCON Radhadesh  
Château de Petite Somme 5  
6940 Septon (Durbuy)  
Belgium

e-mail: [health@pamho.net](mailto:health@pamho.net)

web: [www.iskcon.com](http://www.iskcon.com)

*Please send all correspondence to this address.*

*Contributions are welcome for future newsletters.*

*Pictures on pp. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10-11 are used with permission.*

© BBT International

# Quotes from the Previous Acaryas

## *Srila Prabhupada on health*

### **The source of curing the disease of material existence: the holy name**

TRANSLATION: The Lord in His incarnation of Dhanvantari very quickly cures the diseases of the ever-diseased living entities simply by His fame personified, and only because of Him do the demigods achieve long lives. Thus the Personality of Godhead becomes ever glorified. He also exacted a share from the sacrifices, and it is He only who inaugurated the medical science or the knowledge of medicine in the universe.

PURPORT: As stated in the beginning of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, everything emanates from the ultimate source of the Personality of Godhead; it is therefore understood in this verse that medical science or knowledge in medicine was also inaugurated by the Personality of Godhead in His incarnation Dhanvantari, and thus the knowledge is recorded in the Vedas. The Vedas are the source of all knowledge, and thus knowledge in medical science is also there for the perfect cure of the diseases of the living entity. The embodied living entity is diseased by the very construction of his body. The body is the symbol of diseases. The disease may differ from one variety to another, but disease must be there just as there is birth and death for everyone. So, by the grace of the Personality of Godhead, not only are diseases of the body and mind cured, but also the soul is relieved of the constant repetition

of birth and death. The name of the Lord is also called *bhavausadhi*, or the source of curing the disease of material existence.

— *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 2.7.22.

### **Curing the material disease of the spirit soul**

Murari Gupta could treat both bodily and spiritual disease because he was a physician by profession and a great devotee of the Lord in terms of spiritual advancement. This is an example of service to humanity. Everyone should know that there are two kinds of diseases in human society. One disease, which is called *adhyatmika*, or material disease, pertains to the body, but the main disease is spiritual. The living entity is eternal, but somehow or other, when in contact with the material energy, he is subjected to the repetition of birth, death, old age, and disease. The physicians of the modern day should learn from Murari Gupta. Although modern philanthropic physicians open gigantic hospitals, there are no hospitals to cure the material disease of the spirit soul. The Krishna consciousness movement has taken up the mission of curing this disease, but people are not very appreciative because they do not know what this disease is. A diseased person needs both proper medicine and a proper diet, and therefore the Krishna consciousness movement supplies materially stricken people with the medicine of the chanting of the holy name, or the Hare Krishna *maha-*

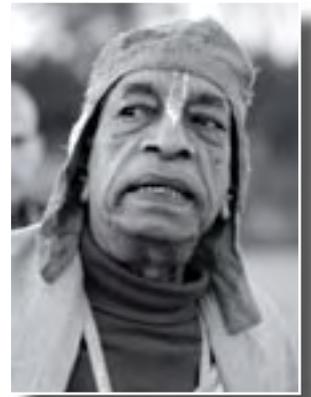
*mantra*, and a diet of *prasadam*. There are many hospitals and medical clinics to cure bodily diseases, but there are no such hospitals to cure the material disease of the spirit soul. The centers of the Krishna consciousness movement are the only established hospitals that can cure man of birth, death, old age, and disease.

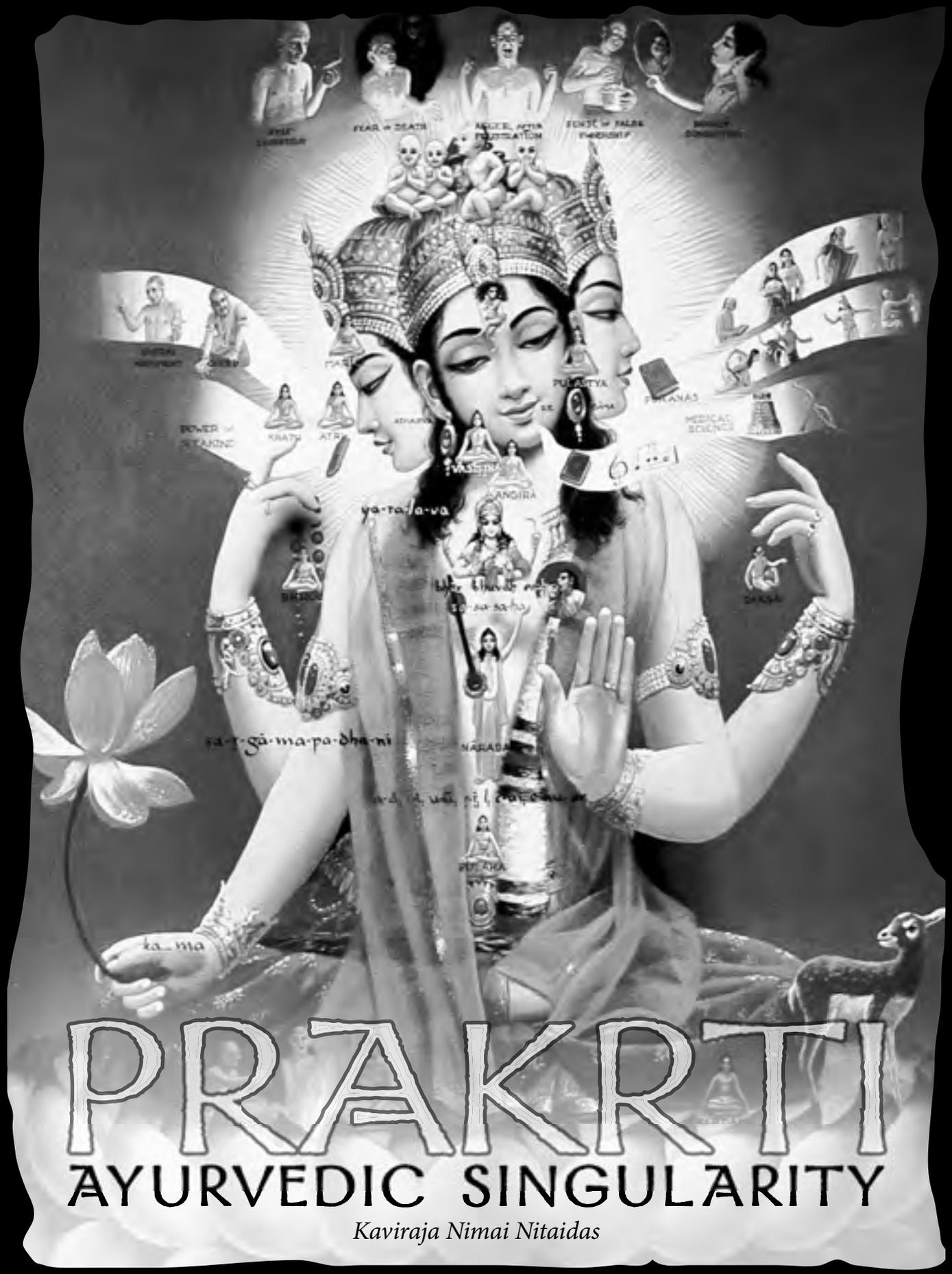
— *Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Adi* 10.52.

### **Nima (neem) removes inauspiciousness**

Dakini and Sankhini are two companions of Lord Siva and his wife who are supposed to be extremely inauspicious, having been born of ghostly life. It is believed that such inauspicious living creatures cannot go near a *nima* tree. At least medically it is accepted that *nima* wood is extremely antiseptic, and formerly it was customary to have a *nima* tree in front of one's house. On very large roads in India, especially in Uttar Pradesh, there are hundreds and thousands of *nima* trees. *Nima* wood is so antiseptic that the Ayurvedic science uses it to cure leprosy. Medical scientists have extracted the active principle of the *nima* tree, which is called margosic acid. *Nima* is used for many purposes, especially to brush the teeth. In Indian villages ninety percent of the people use *nima* twigs for this purpose. Because of all the antiseptic effects of the *nima* tree and because Lord Caitanya was born beneath a *nima* tree, Sita Thakurani gave the Lord the name Nimai.

— *Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Adi* 13.117.





# PRAKRITI

## AYURVEDIC SINGULARITY

*Kaviraja Nimai Nitaidas*



Among some Ayurvedic practitioners, the determination of *prakrti* (“nature” or “singularity” — often rendered as “constitution”) is limited to evaluating the diathesis (disease tendency) of patients. But knowing the diathesis is often insufficient and sometimes even misleading when attempting to guide patients toward better health. The practice of Ayurveda requires that the entire patient be understood in both disease and health. Determining *prakrti* is a complex process best accomplished under a

practitioner’s expert guidance. Discovering the multiple facets of *prakrti* is a process of deep introspection, which is an essential requirement for healing.

The usual *prakrti* questionnaires used to evaluate a patient’s constitution are oversimplified and often lead to errors. Such questionnaires commingle and confound elements of various typologies and then conflate all answers into one assessment. The approach is reductionistic and readily explains why many practitioners feel frustrated by superficial characterizations: the approach precludes the adoption of accurately personalized care plans.

Different aspects of Ayurvedic singularity will be more or less important in developing an individualized regimen. A patient’s psychological disposition and socio-developmental typology will have more relevance when determining what practices to adopt to balance the *ahankara* (ego), *buddhi* (intelligence), *manas* (mind), and *indriyas* (senses). The physiological constitution and diathetic tendency will carry more weight in selecting relevant practices for regulating *prana* and *agni* (energy and digestion). And physical constitution has precedence in planning specific aspects of diet and regeneration practices for the physical body.

## Psychological Disposition

We all exhibit modifications of pure consciousness according to our inborn tendencies, the types of association we keep, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Within the realm of conditioned existence, no one purely embodies balance (*sattva*), assertiveness (*rajas*), or passivity (*tamas*). Rather, we exhibit traits and qualities of all three dispositions.

Those of us who have predominantly balanced and passive dispositions occasionally experience assertive states. Balanced individuals generally have few passive states, and passive individuals have few balanced states. That is because there is no direct relation between *sattva* and *tamas*, and their connection must be mediated through *rajas*. Predominantly assertive individuals experience greater variability and can more easily move toward either *sattva* or *tamas*.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (14.9–10, 14.16–17), the science of psychological disposition is explained:

*Sattva* attaches one to happiness, *rajas* to activity, and *tamas*, by eclipsing the power of discrimination, to inertia. Sometimes *sattva* is predominant, overpowering *rajas* and *tamas*; sometimes *rajas* prevails; and sometimes *tamas* obscures *sattva* and *rajas*. . . . The sages say that the fruit of balanced actions is equilibrium and purity. The fruit of assertive action is pain. The fruit of passive actions is ignorance. Wisdom arises from *sattva*, greed from *rajas*, and heedlessness, delusion, and dullness from *tamas*.

### The balanced disposition

A person with a predominance of *sattva* exhibits serenity, stability, magnanimity, tolerance, detachment, patience, uprightness, discrimination, dispassion, compassion, and illumination. Balanced individuals are often vegetarians and tend to avoid intoxicants. In *Bhagavad-gita* (14.6 and 11) we find:

Of these three dispositions, the stainless *sattva* gives enlightenment and health. Nevertheless, it also binds one through attachment to happiness and knowledge. . . . One may know that *sattva* is prevalent when the light of wisdom shines through all the senses.

### The assertive disposition

A person with a predominance of *rajas* exhibits attachment, craving, clinging, lust, avarice, and intolerance. Assertive individuals are often non-vegetarians, but generally avoid excessive seasoning, and they have a strong aversion toward unclean or rancid products. They indulge moderately in the use of intoxicants or shun them for health reasons. *Bhagavad-gita* (14.7 and 12) says:

*Rajas* is imbued with passion, giving birth to desire and attachment. It strongly binds the embodied soul through clinging to action. . . . A preponderance of *rajas* causes greed, agitation, excessive effort, restlessness, and desire.

### The passive disposition

A person with a predominance of *tamas* exhibits delusion, anger, fear, arrogance, ignorance, cruelty, negligence, and indolence. Passive individuals exercise little or no discrimination in their eating habits, and they are fond of intoxicants. *Bhagavad-gita* (14.8 and 13) says:

*Tamas* arises from ignorance, deluding all embodied beings. It binds them by misconception, idleness, and slumber. . . . *Tamas* produces darkness, sloth, neglect of duties, and delusion.

## Occupation

Acharya Charaka has clearly enunciated that maintaining health requires the combination of four factors: (1) a proper Ayurvedic preceptor, (2) a capable attendant (for those who require assistance), (3) a dedicated practitioner, and (4) the correct practice. Depending on one’s occupation in the four occupational

Each of us has elements of all physiological typologies, because without the support of *prana*, *agni*, and *ojas* — the three pillars of health — we could not continue to live.

sectors, or *varnas* (*brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya*, and *sudra*), it is more or less possible to undertake certain disciplines, as all practices consume time and require resources. Membership in the occupational sectors, for the purposes of this typological evaluation, is strictly a matter of how one uses one's time. As far as resources are concerned, the level of income generated by an occupation plays a role in one's ability to pursue health practices. And the nature of the work itself directly affects the status of one's health and exposes one to diverse healthy or unhealthy influences.

Brahminical pursuits, which require mental but not physical exertion, generally do not generate great income. But rarely are *brahmanas* exposed to unhealthy environmental influences because of their occupation. The occupation of *ksatriyas* does not require sustained physical exertion and usually generates substantial income. But the nature of the work can be dangerous, especially for those engaged in politics and military command. *Ksatriyas* are therefore more exposed to unhealthy environmental influences. *Vaisyas* can generate substantial and sustained income. Because the nature of their work is physically demanding, they require stamina. Exposure to environmental hazards may be greater for *vaisyas* than for the previous two sectors, particularly in the field of agriculture. Through their physically demanding but mentally unchallenging labor, *sudras* generate a consistent but relatively lower income; for them exposure to environmental hazards is the greatest.

Participation in these sectors may also condition the mind in ways that influence health, as it can affect one's psychological disposition. Scholarly pursuits reinforce a balanced disposition, executive functions promote a combination of the characteristics of assertive and balanced dispositions, the trades induce a combination of assertive and passive dispositions, and labor instills a passive disposition.

## Developmental Stages

The developmental stages closely follow a person's age, though there can be discrepancies in individual cases. The stages include the student, or *brahmacari* stage (birth to age 27); the householder, or *grhastha* stage (age 28 to 54); the retired, or *vanaprastha* stage (age 55 to 81); and the renounced, or *sannyasi* stage (age 81 and older). Other classifications reduce the duration of each developmental stage to 24 years each. In some traditions, due to the current unfavorable organization of society, it is recommended that one accept the renounced order after age 50.

A student might have more time than a working person, but he lacks sufficient resources, while certain retired persons might have both time and resources. A person in the renounced order may not be interested in pursuing any regimen that will infringe upon spiritual cultivation. The skillful practitioner must

always take into account such differences when developing a treatment plan.

It is important to note that there is a distinct correlation between the social sectors and the developmental stages. While we all age similarly, only the *brahmanas* are expected to undergo all four developmental stages, including renunciation. For *ksatriyas*, the process ends with the retired stage, as they are not required to proceed to the renounced stage. For *vaisyas*, only the stages of student and householder are obligatory. And for the *sudras*, the householder stage is often the only reality throughout life.

## Physiological Constitution

Each of us has elements of all physiological typologies, because without the support of *prana*, *agni*, and *ojas* — the three pillars of health — we could not continue to live. However, it is possible to identify a dominant type. This typology often correlates with learning approaches. *Prana*-dominants learn best by doing; *agni*-dominants learn by watching; and *ojas*-dominants learn by repetition.

### Prana-dominant

The person in whom *prana* dominates exhibits appropriate conduct of all functions. The *prana*-dominant type has a persistent desire to lead a busy life and is full of zest for varieties of experience. This type exhibits proper command of the organs of perception and action and has excellent energy levels. Appetite is modest but regular, and digestion is fast but healthy. Sleep is light but satisfactory. *Prana*-dominants have superior respiration, and excretion of urine and feces is both complete and regular.

### Agni-dominant

The person in whom *agni* dominates benefits from favorable assimilation of experiences and substances. The *agni*-dominant type is brave and generous and has a strong commitment to discover and cultivate truth through intellectual pursuits. This type exhibits superior ability to perceive clearly and has the discipline for sustained effort. Appetite is strong and frequent, and digestion is thorough. Sleep is sound and not too prolonged. *Agni*-dominants enjoy fine vision and have a radiant appearance.

### Ojas-dominant

The person in whom *ojas* dominates has a tranquil, compassionate, and tolerant nature. The *ojas*-dominant type is serene and steadfast and has a prodigious memory. This type enjoys superior generation and preservation of bodily tissues, has a firm physique, and a strong skeletal structure. Appetite is normal and regular, and digestion is slow but complete. Sleep is very sound. *Ojas*-dominants have excellent reproductive capacity and great longevity.

## Diathesis, or Disease Tendency

When the three pillars become unbalanced, we experience their modifications, known as *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. These are the ubiquitous *doshas* on which most current texts on Ayurveda are almost exclusively focused. Determining the disease tendency, or diathesis, is indeed very important, because it helps a doctor to understand how one became ill: under stress, due to lack of proper rest, or because of feeling depleted.

### Vata-dominant

The person with a *vata* diathesis exhibits undefined fear, apprehension, suspicion, and weariness. The *vata*-diathesis leads to mental and emotional excess, confusion, and impaired memory. Both perception and action are disturbed, the senses become unreliable, and reactions are inappropriate. Appetite is erratic, and digestion is inhibited. Sleep is disturbed; rest is difficult. *Vata*-dominants suffer nervous and respiratory disorders, and excretion of urine and feces is scanty and irregular.

### Pitta-dominant

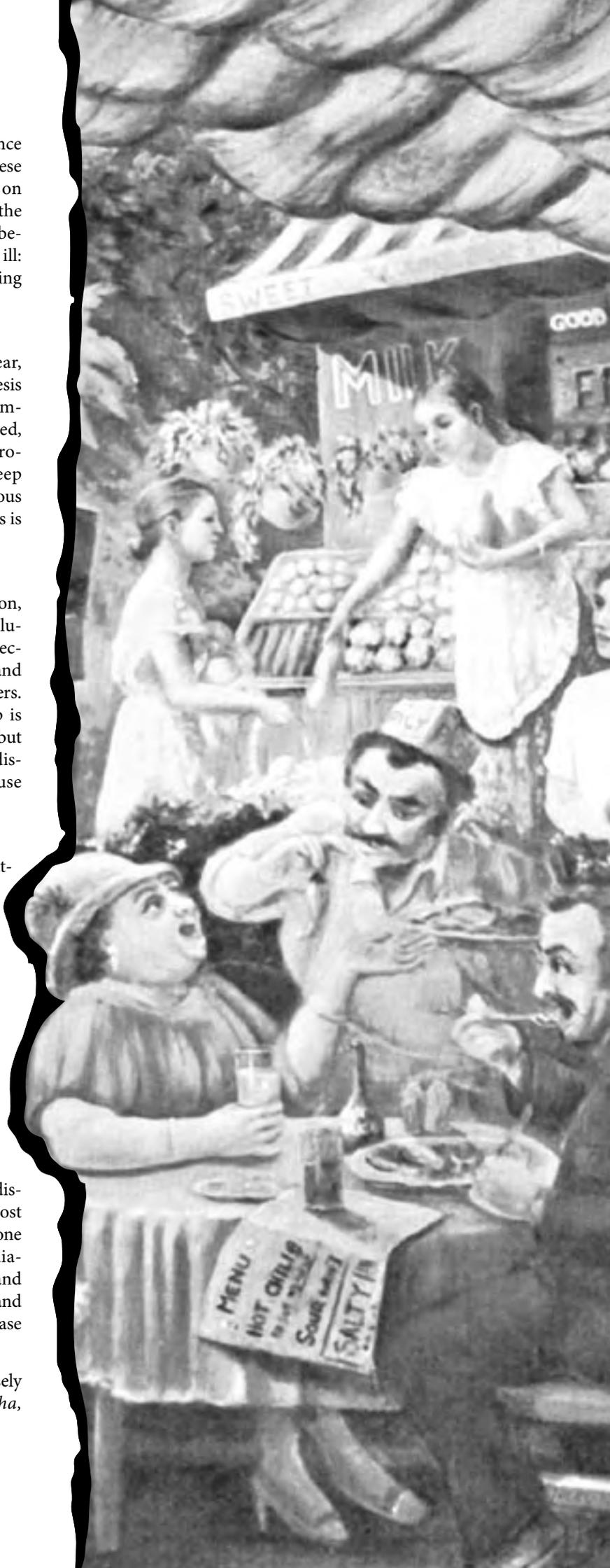
The person with a *pitta* diathesis exhibits anger, aggression, pessimism, and disquiet. The *pitta*-diathesis leads to delusions and emotional fluctuation, fixation, and highly selective memory. Perception becomes tainted by emotion, and there is an impulse to control the environment and others. Appetite is excessive, and digestion is too rapid. Sleep is agitated, with violent nightmares, and rest is prolonged but unsatisfactory. *Pitta*-dominants suffer digestive and skin disorders, and excretion of sweat, urine, and feces is profuse and often offensive.

### Kapha-dominant

The person with a *kapha* diathesis exhibits insecurity, attachment, jealousy, and dullness. The *kapha*-diathesis leads to rigidity of thought, emotional obstinacy, and excessive dwelling on memories. Perception becomes slow and unreliable, and there is a tendency to allow the environment and others to assume control. Appetite is poor, although there can be constant emotional feeding (eating without hunger). Digestion is very slow, and decomposition of food proceeds faster than digestion. Sleep is profound and prolonged, but ultimately tiring. *Kapha*-dominants suffer from obesity and blood-sugar regulation disorders. Excretion of sweat, urine, and feces is slow and profuse and sometimes obstructed.

As with *prana*, *agni*, and *ojas*, we all experience different proportions of *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* in our diathesis, or disease tendency. But in this particular typology there are most often mixed types, and it is not possible to identify just one clear predominance. In fact, most people have mixed diathesis, the most common being *vata-pitta*, *pitta-kapha*, and *vata-kapha*. Of course, there exist some pure *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* diathesis, and even some so-called “balanced” disease tendencies.

The task is to determine which disease tendency most closely corresponds to the patient: *vata*, *vata-pitta*, *vata-kapha*,



*pitta*, *pitta-kapha*, *kapha*, or *vata-pitta-kapha*. We do not include “reverse” mixed diatheses, such as *pitta-vata*, *kapha-pitta*, and *kapha-vata*. There is a good reason for this apparent omission, namely, that these disease tendencies simply cannot manifest. The explanation is both simple and profound: whenever two *doshas* are mixed, the more mobile will dominate. Thus when *vata* and *pitta* associate, *vata* dominates, being the most mobile of all. When *pitta* and *kapha* associate, *pitta* dominates, because it is fluid and *kapha* is static.

## Physical Constitution

The physical constitution is the most dense and material of the aspects of Ayurvedic singularity. It expresses the qualities of the physical body. There are five possible types, corresponding to the elemental states of matter (*panca-mahabhuta*): field, volatile, radiant, liquid, and solid. Knowing the physical constitution of a person helps us to differentiate between plausible but different practices in Ayurvedic care.

The elemental states of matter correspond in a very straightforward manner to *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*, as well as to eight basic characteristics: light/heavy, cold/hot, moist/dry, and mobile/static. Therefore, when we have doubts about which qualities are increased in the *doshas*, we resort to our physical constitution to get a clearer perspective.

States	Qualities	Doshas
<i>Akasa</i> — field	Light / Cold / Dry / Static	<i>vata</i>
<i>Vayu</i> — volatile	Light / Cold / Dry / Mobile	<i>vata</i>
<i>Tejas</i> — radiant	Light / Hot / Dry / Mobile	<i>pitta</i>
<i>Apa</i> — liquid	Heavy / Cold / Moist / Static	<i>pitta</i> <i>kapha</i>
<i>Prthvi</i> — solid	Heavy / Cold / Dry / Static	<i>kapha</i>

Thus, when *vata* is aggravated, we can determine (by knowing the physical constitution) whether the aggravation is due to an excess in the state of the field or a volatile, and then decide how to approach the imbalance. The same goes for *pitta*, which can be aggravated due to excessive radiant or liquid states, and for *kapha*, which can be aggravated due to excessive liquid or solid states.

### **Akasa: field-dominant**

The field-dominant constitution exhibits many large, hollow structures, and limbs that are disproportionately small compared to the torso. There is a tendency to produce many physiological sounds, such as those arising from the joints, intestines, or airways. Field-dominant constitutions have a tendency to develop osteoporosis and tuberculosis.

### **Vayu: volatile-dominant**

The volatile-dominant constitution is readily identifiable by constant movement, slight asymmetry, and large extremities.

The coloration is dark, and the skin, hair, and nails are rough. Volatile-dominant constitutions have a tendency to develop imbalances in the nervous system and the joints.

### **Tejas: radiant-dominant**

The radiant-dominant constitution is notable for ruddiness, intensity, and heat. The eyes and the voice are ardent and penetrating; the hair is light, or prematurely gray and thin. Radiant-dominant constitutions have a tendency to develop skin complaints and liver disorders.

### **Apa: liquid-dominant**

The liquid-dominant constitution exhibits softness, moistness, and coolness. There is a tendency to paleness of the skin, but the eyes are large and glistening. Liquid-dominant constitutions tend to develop kidney complaints, high blood pressure, and muscular weakness.

### **Prthvi: solid-dominant**

The solid-dominant constitution shows characteristic corpulence, stability, and immobility. There is a tendency toward slow movements and functions. Solid-dominant constitutions are prone to sugar-regulation disorders and obesity.

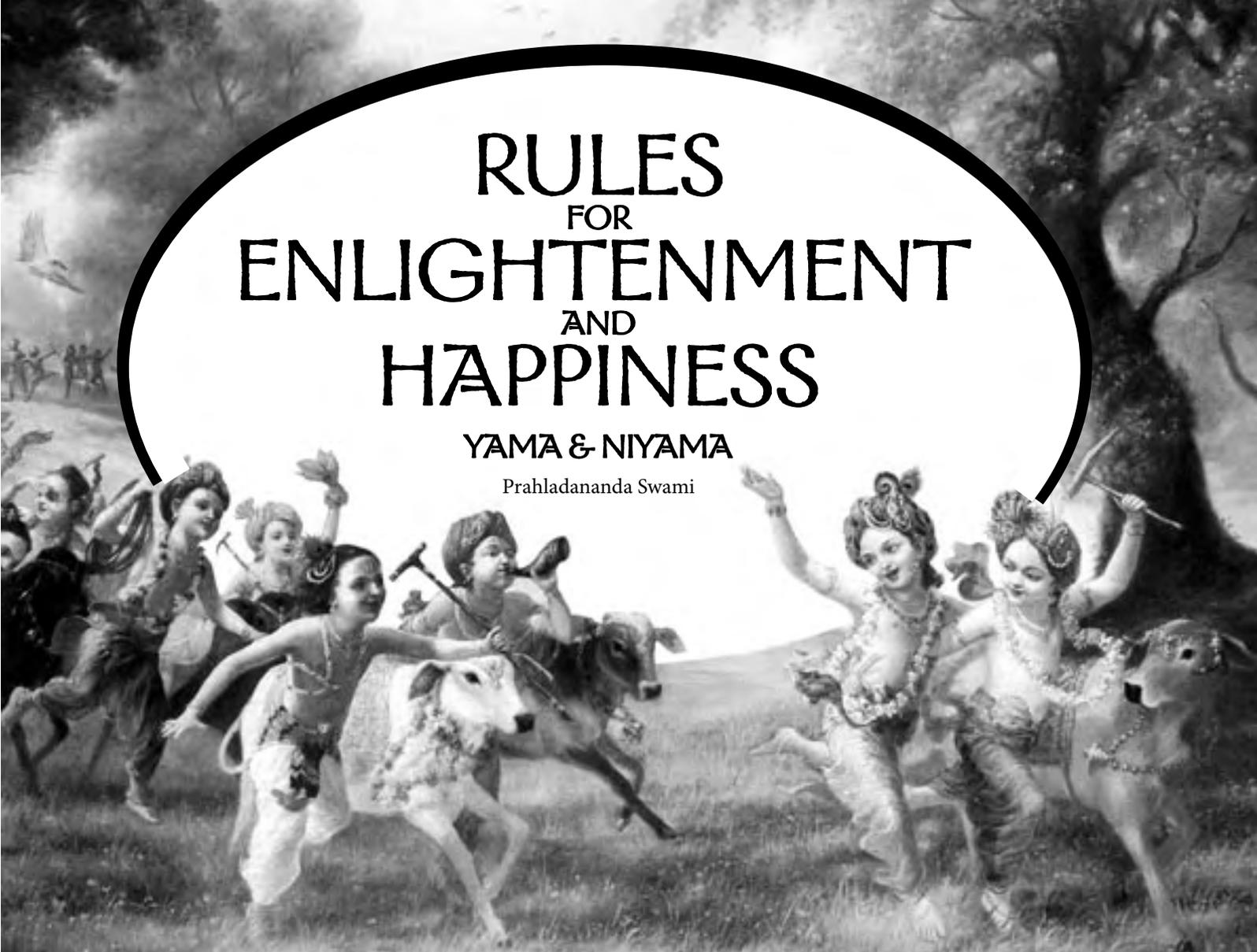
Although we all have aspects of each physical constitution, it is fairly easy to determine which is dominant. Remember to think of the four basic qualities of each element when identifying different constitutions. For example, if one is not sure whether a person is radiant- or liquid-dominant, knowing that radiant is light, hot, dry, and mobile can help one distinguish this from the heavy, cold, moist, and static qualities of liquid.

In future articles, we will explore how knowledge of the complete Ayurvedic singularity is essential in developing a full treatment plan for each individual patient.

*Nimai Nitaidas (ISKCON New England) is a disciple of His Holiness Niranjana Swami. He has studied and practiced Ayurveda for over two decades and is the Assistant Clinical Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health at Tufts University School of Medicine. He can be reached at [nimai.nitai@pamho.net](mailto:nimai.nitai@pamho.net)*

## Announcement

*Nimai Nitaidas, the author of this article, is launching the Dharma Academy at ISKCON Boston soon, and it will be offering a traditional Suddha Ayurveda course in three one-year stages, followed by a final (optional) two-year stage (paricaraka-nurse, cikitsaka-therapist, vaidya-doctor, and kaviraja-preceptor). Devotees will be able to decide if they wish to proceed further after each stage, or receive certification at the completed level. If anyone is interested, please contact him at [nimai.nitai@pamho.net](mailto:nimai.nitai@pamho.net)*



# RULES FOR ENLIGHTENMENT AND HAPPINESS

## YAMA & NIYAMA

Prahladananda Swami

**A**n estimated thirty million Americans practice the physical and breathing exercises of *hatha-yoga*, which are two parts of an eightfold process called *astanga-yoga*. (*Asta* means “eight,” and *anga* means “limbs.” *Yoga* means “to link with the Supreme.”) The foundations of *astanga-yoga* are *yama* and *niyama*, or social and personal duties, while *asana* (physical postures) and *pranayama* (breathing exercises) are the third and fourth steps. The remaining four steps, or limbs, are *pratyahara* (detachment), *dharana* (contemplation), *dhyana* (concentration), and *samadhi* (steady concentration).

Other yoga processes, *e.g.*, *bhakti-yoga* — the yoga of devotion — also have rules. To reach the goals of yoga described by authorities, we must systematically follow a yoga process, just as to

graduate from a school we follow its curriculum. The foremost authorities say that the ultimate yogic goals are not health and mystic powers but realizing the self as being different from matter and reviving our dormant, eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna.

Scriptures and yogic texts prescribe physical and mental disciplines for material and spiritual progress because only regulated actions can free us from the attachments and aversions that arise from the agitation of the mind and senses. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, our entanglement in the three modes of material nature (goodness, passion, and ignorance) is explained as the primary source of disturbance to our minds and bodies. We become entangled in material nature when we desire to be the lord and enjoyer of creation

and when our desires are not fulfilled we become frustrated. The Lord manifests and controls the modes through His potencies. So we will overcome them only by following a process prescribed by the Lord. By following yogic disciplines, our attachments to the modes of passion and ignorance diminish and we gradually rise to the mode of goodness, wherein we know more and suffer less. When the pure spirit soul is entangled in illusion born from the modes it cannot perceive its original, joyful nature. Yoga removes the artificial covering of the three modes and revives the soul's original pure consciousness.

*Astanga-yoga* develops higher intelligence by which one can progressively refine the soul's control of the mind and senses, and thus reach a platform beyond material conditioning. However, this state is just

a preface to actual spiritual life, which starts when we awaken our consciousness of Krishna. After understanding ourselves to be Lord Krishna's eternal servants, we begin our natural life of loving service in relationship with Him and His liberated servants.

Two paths lead to perfection in yoga, the direct and the indirect paths. The indirect path includes different progressive stages of yoga. *Bhakti-yoga* (devotional service), is direct, while the indirect path involves renouncing the fruits of work (*karma-yoga*), cultivating spiritual knowledge (*jñana-yoga*), and practicing meditation on the Lord in the heart (the goal of *astanga-yoga*) before awakening devotion. *Astanga-yoga* is not recommended for us in this age of Kali, because we are short-lived, irregular in our habits, and physically and mentally weak. Some exceptional person may reach perfection by this indirect path, but most people nowadays cannot. Imitating the ancient *astanga-yoga* system is definitely a waste of time if one is unaware of the goal or the process of achieving it.

The sage Patanjali — considered the father of *astanga-yoga* — wrote the *Yoga Sutras*. The eight steps in developing consciousness (*yama*, *niyama*, and so on) are applicable to any activity. Suppose someone plays soccer (also known as football). *Yama* and *niyama*, which refer to social and personal discipline, would correspond to team cooperation and individual display of skills respectively. *Asana* is the position of the body in an activity such as striking a ball with the feet or head; a head-stand in this sport would be disadvantageous. *Pranayama* generates energy, without which no one could play. *Pratyahara* refers to not becoming distracted by sensory stimulation. If the fans cheer a player running with the ball, he should not become distracted, stop, and raise his arms to the crowd. *Dharana* means contemplation: knowing the positions of the ball, the other players, and the goal. *Dhyana* means to concentrate, in this case on kicking the ball toward the goal and on avoiding opponents. When a soccer player kicks the ball into the goal, his team achieves (temporarily) *samadhi*.

## A Yogi's Duties

Patanjali divides *yama* and *niyama* into ten categories:

**Yama** (social discipline):

- ahimsa* — nonviolence
- satya* — truthfulness
- asteya* — not stealing
- brahmacharya* — celibacy
- aparigraha* — non-possessiveness

**Niyama** (personal discipline):

- sauca* — cleanliness
- santosa* — contentment
- tapas* — austerity
- svadhyaya* — study
- isvara-pranidhana* — surrender to God

Disciplining the senses and mind is similarly explained in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (6.1.13–14):

To concentrate the mind, one must observe a life of celibacy and not fall down. One must undergo the austerity of voluntarily giving up sense enjoyment. One must then control the mind and senses; give charity; be truthful, clean, and nonviolent; follow the regulative principles; and regularly chant the holy name of the Lord. . . .

The disciplines of *yama* and *niyama* are similar to the ways in which a *brahmana* (an intellectual or priest) works (Bg. 18.42):

Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and religiousness — these are the natural qualities by which the *brahmanas* work.

The development of brahminical qualities, though not the complete perfection of life, makes us aware of higher consciousness and gives a glimpse into spiritual life.

A devotee of Krishna eschews illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, and intoxication. This helps a devotee develop qualities in the mode of goodness: cleanliness, mercy, truthfulness, and austerity. Offenselessly chanting the names of God helps elevate the devotee to the transcendental platform. Srila Prabhupada explains all this in his purport to *The Nectar of Instruction*, Text 3:



“... one should not be idle but should be very enthusiastic about executing the regulative principles. Neglect of the regulative principles will destroy devotional service. In this Krishna consciousness movement there are four basic regulative principles, forbidding illicit sex, meat-eating, gambling, and intoxication. A devotee must be very enthusiastic about following these principles. If he becomes slack in following any of them, his progress will certainly be checked. . . . In addition to these four prohibitions (*yama*), there are positive regulative principles (*niyama*), such as the daily chanting of sixteen rounds on *japa-mala* beads. These regulative activities must be faithfully performed with enthusiasm.”

### Sense and Mind Control

The pure spirit soul works with its material mind and intelligence. If our mind and intelligence are entangled in sense gratification, then our yoga practice will not be fruitful. Temporarily or externally we may follow some discipline, but ultimately desires for sense gratification will impel us to satisfy the demands of the mind and senses. Therefore it is a misconception to think that performing *asanas* to reduce fat for health is a method of spiritual realization. Without higher intelligence, the practice of exercises will not help us progress on any path of spiritual perfection. Lord Krishna says (*Bg.* 3.6):

“One who restrains the senses of action but whose mind dwells on sense objects certainly deludes himself and is called a pretender.”

Without mental, intellectual, and spiritual discipline, even better health achieved by a physical process alone will not last, just as a cracked pot will not hold water.

Higher intelligence is meant to engage the senses and mind in the service of Lord Krishna. Discipline of the tongue and genitals are most fundamental. Unless we regulate our choices of food and sex life, there is no possibility of becoming free from material consciousness. Our eating choices are influenced by our tongue’s urge to taste palatable food, and our conceptions of sex life are formed by what we talk about, or vibrate with the tongue, and listen to. Lord Krishna advises us to regulate the tongue’s activities by eating food offered to Him and by speaking and hearing *krishna-katha*, or topics about the Supreme Lord.

Freedom from sex desire is explained by Srila Prabhupada (*Bg.* 6.13–14, purport):

[Yajnavalkya says,] “The vow of *brahmacarya* is meant to help one completely abstain from sex indulgence in work, words, and mind — at all times, under all circumstances, and in all places.” No one can perform correct yoga practice through sex indulgence. *Brahmacarya* is taught, therefore, from childhood, when one has no knowledge of sex life. Children at the age of five are sent to the *guru-kula*, or the place of the spiritual master, and the master trains the young boys in the strict discipline of becoming *brahmacaris*. Without such practice, no one can make advancement in any yoga, whether it be *dhyana* [meditation], *jnana* [knowledge], or *bhakti*. One who, however, follows the rules and regulations of married life, having a sexual relationship only with his wife (and that also under regulation), is also called a *brahmacari*. Such a restrained householder *brahmacari* may be accepted in the *bhakti* school, but the *jnana* and *dhyana* schools do not even admit householder *brahmacaris*. They require complete abstinence without compromise. In the *bhakti* school, a householder *brahmacari* is allowed controlled sex life because the cult of *bhakti-yoga* is so powerful that one automatically loses sexual attraction, being engaged in the superior service of the Lord. In the *Bhagavad-gita* (2.59) it is said:

*visaya vinivartante  
niraharasya dehinah  
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya  
param drstva nivartate*

Whereas others are forced to restrain themselves from sense gratification, a devotee of the Lord automatically refrains because of superior taste. Other than the devotee, no one has any information of that superior taste.

For one not directly engaged in the Lord’s service, moderation of the sense activities is recommended:

There is no possibility of one’s becoming a yogi, O Arjuna, if one eats too much or eats too little, sleeps too much or does not sleep enough. He who is regulated in his habits of eat

(continued on page 19)

# AYURVEDIC TREATMENT

## A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Kancana-valli Devi Dasi



### The place

In late 2002 I spent five weeks at Nagarjuna, an Ayurvedic clinic in Kerala, South India. Kerala is a home to many Ayurvedic clinics, some with a long history of practicing this ancient medical art. The Nagarjuna clinic is near

Cochin, on the Periyar River, in the village of Kalady (Sankaracarya's birthplace). The area is lush and subtropical, and the people are warm and friendly. The weather was milder than I had expected: neither too hot during the day, nor too cold at night, and occasional stormy downpours. The clean and well-appointed clinic had treatment rooms onsite and a dining room, where we ate together. Although the food was pure vegetarian and also very good, I cooked for myself when time and energy allowed.

I was not the only patient. There were other ladies from India, Germany, Switzerland, and Greece. I spent the first few days quizzing them on what would happen to me while I was there. Naturally, there were minor difficulties; the most prominent



one was the planes flying directly overhead to the local airport, three km away. But there were not many flights, and I got used to the noise, although the first one was quite a shock.

### The treatment

The reason I went to the clinic was to gain first-hand experience of *panchakarma*. The treatment I was going to receive has two stages. The first and longest part, *purvakarma*, is preparatory. In this stage toxins are drawn out of the body's cells by medication and massage. In the second part, *panchakarma*, these toxins are flushed out of the system. Before starting the treatment, I saw the clinic's principal doctor, Krisnan Namboodiri. He took my full case history and asked what medical complaints I suffered from (migraines, exhaustion, insomnia, and nervous stress). After this he mapped out my treatment and set up my schedule. Every day a doctor checked on how things were going and made any necessary adjustments.

I had quite a regulated routine. At 7 a.m. I had a massage (the morning treatment). At 9 a.m. we were served a substantial and nourishing breakfast. Lunch was at 1 p.m. Then around 4 p.m., I received my afternoon treatment. We had yoga classes at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., and went to bed by 9 p.m.

The Ayurvedic massages, though sometimes a bit painful, were

exhilarating, powerful, and relaxing. Each type of massage was repeated for several days to increase its overall effect. Massages were performed using:

- a) special heated oils
- b) bags of herbs dipped in oil and then pounded into the skin (I was so surprised the first time the therapists did this that I laughed the whole time, much to their amusement.)
- c) special bags of cooked rice dipped in milk, which nourishes and rejuvenates the body and feels wonderful
- d) hot medicated oil, called *pizhichil* (This was my favorite. They poured three liters of oil over me for forty minutes each time.)

After many of these treatments I felt tired. The doctors said that this was because Ayurvedic massage changes the way the body's organs function, to facilitate detoxification. However, despite our fatigue, we were discouraged from sleeping for even a few minutes during the day because this would disrupt the body's functioning.

Apart from physical treatments, we were given medicines of various colors and tastes (some of them were quite unpalatable) five to six times a day. This regime started at 6 a.m., when we were given a cup of lukewarm, brown, strong-tasting medicine. It was good that they brought us the medicines, because I am sure no one would have taken them on time otherwise.

## Panchakarma

The second part of the treatment included five methods of cleansing and took place mostly toward the end of my stay. Ayurvedic treatment and medicine, though very good, it is not for the faint-hearted — especially not *panchakarma*. I was deeply grateful that they decided I would have only four of the five possible treatments. I was spared *vamana* — therapeutic vomiting. The other four parts were: *snehavasthy* (an oil-based enema), *kashayavasthy* (an oil-based enema mixed with medicated decoctions), *virechana* (purgation using laxative medicines and fasting), and *nasya* (cleansing of the nasal passages with a special spicy oil).

I knew a little of what to expect before I left Europe, so I was somewhat prepared to accept the loving ministrations of the doctors and staff. Because *panchakarma* has a powerful effect on the body, close medical supervision is necessary while undergoing it. Hence, one's personal privacy during these times is in the hands of between one and five attendants. Being from England, I have been brought up to observe many taboos concerning the body and its functions. To go through this process I had to put them aside and depend on the staff's good wishes. But because they are expert and really care about their patients, the experience was both beneficial and enjoyable.

## Other treatments

Besides *panchakarma* and *purvakarma*, I also had inhalation treatment for a persistent cold, treatment for my eyes, and something they call *dhara* for insomnia and stress. These treatments usually took place in the afternoons. The eye treatment, said to be a cure even for cataracts, was about the most un-

pleasant of all the therapies — truly an austerity. It went on for seven days and stung very badly. My eyes watered profusely. Although I told the lady doctor that I did not like it at all and wanted to stop, she gently persuaded me to complete the full treatment. Thankfully, it got slightly less painful each time.

*Dhara* was probably the easiest treatment to take. Basically, you lie on your back and for forty minutes they pour some liquid in a slow stream over your forehead. I received two types of *dhara*: one with warm oil and the other with cool buttermilk. This process felt so soothing! It was amazing. Often I would nod off, only to be tenderly prodded to wakefulness by the lady administering it. Afterwards I always felt a tremendous sense of relief, as if someone had removed all the stress from my body.

## Impressions

I was impressed by the quality of the medicines and treatments. The staff members were all well-trained, and many of the medicines were prepared onsite, using fresh ingredients. The range of ailments they purported to treat was also impressive: deafness, obesity, heart disease, paralysis, malaria, arthritis, nervous stress, cancer, digestive disorders, migraine, chronic fatigue — the list goes on. They even have a good record of helping people who suffer from psychological problems and take heavy medications like lithium.

On the last day, after the morning massage, I had a steam bath. As I slowly cooked in the heat, all the ladies who had been treating me came in and we laughed and joked. I felt sad to leave them because they were so warm and kind. In Nagarjuna's friendly atmosphere the people were very considerate and took care of one another.

Before I left, I spoke with the doctors about what to do next, and they recommended that I rest completely for at least three weeks after returning home and that I continue to take the medicines for six or seven weeks. I thanked the doctors and returned to Belgium after gathering up the kilos of medicines and oils I would use. Unfortunately, the date I had scheduled for my return was exactly the day after the end of my treatment. This proved to be an awkward choice because long journeys take a lot of energy, and taking rest was really what I ought to have done after such an intense period of treatment.

## An acquired taste

I am glad that I had the chance to undergo this treatment. The effects of Ayurveda are preventive as well as curative. Or, as they say in communications, "It's a process, not a product." I definitely feel more energetic and healthy now. In addition, the monthly migraines, constant insomnia, and nervous stress that I suffered from before the treatment have also improved. Still, it is a shame that I did not take the rest the doctors recommended because then the effects would have been stronger and more immediate.

Appreciating Ayurvedic *panchakarma* treatment is an acquired taste and is not something everyone will do. But because my personal experience of this treatment was so wonderful, I recommend it to those looking for good alternative health care.

# Herbal Help

*How herbs can help medical problems*

Raga Manjari Devi Dasi and Rama Prasad

(Part 3; continued from the previous issue, No. 9 / 2003)



## Memory

Ayurveda explains that memory retention is governed by *kapha*, information assimilation is ruled by *pitta*, and memory retrieval is connected with *vata*. *Vata* body-types grasp concepts quickly and forget them just as rapidly; *pittas* are quick to comprehend and remember well; *kaphas* are slow to understand but retain knowledge a long time.

Ayurveda uses herbs, diet, meditation, and body therapies to nourish and stabilize brain activity. Brain boosters include *ashwagandha*, ginseng, cayenne, *brahmi*, calamus, *shankapuspi*, ginkgo biloba, holy basil, *bhringaraja*, gotu cola, gooseberry, milk and ghee, *nasya*, *brahmi* oil applied to the head, and *saraswatam* powder (with ten memory-enhancing herbs).

## Lifestyle changes

A serene mind is like a still lake: drop something in it and it creates a rippling impression. However, a stressed mind is like a choppy ocean: too distracted to register extra activity. This is why, being overloaded and preoccupied, we often forget information while under stress. Ayurveda recommends meditation or guided relaxation to still the hyperactive mind.

Brain function is also impaired by poor cerebro-vascular circulation. This can be improved with aerobic exercise and daily cranial massage with coconut or *brahmi* oil.

Brain foods include tapioca, spinach, almonds, pure ghee, and cow's milk. Toxic

and oxidizing substances such as aluminum, mercury, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, rancid fats, and environmental pollutants decrease brain functions and destroy brain cells. Nutrients shown to aid the memory are coenzyme Q10, essential fatty acids, vitamin B12, and iron.

## Case study

A 58-year-old *vata-pitta* constitution, Al, started to forget things like the names of friends and where he left his car keys. He simultaneously experienced stress because he was (reluctantly) due to retire soon. Al was given *brahmi* and *bhringaraja* oil to apply to his head daily. He also took *brahmi*, gotu cola, and ginkgo biloba, with warm ghee and cow's milk to aid its absorption. Counseling helped Al to see the positive side to retirement. He wrote down aspirations, including places to see, hobbies to pursue, and writing projects to work on. Daily Qi-gong helped Al relax and cleared his mind of stressful self-talk. He also reduced his excessive alcohol intake. By these adjustments, Al's memory gradually improved.

## Menopause

With a positive perspective, menopause can be welcomed as a natural metamorphosis rather than a disease or a dreaded ending. Ayurveda sees it as a "meaningful pause" before the beginning of a liberating new phase — a time when women's wisdom comes to fruition so that they can share their wealth of experience. Many women make a smooth transition into menopause, happy to say goodbye to the cramps, bleeding, and mood fluctuations associated with the hormonal cycle.

This is especially the case with healthy, fit women, and those from cultures where age is valued. Menopause can also cause fibroids to shrink and thus relieve endometriosis.

For others, challenges arise at this time because the *doshic* imbalances bring hot flashes, tiredness, moodiness, dryness, and weight gain. The risks of osteoporosis, heart disease, and high cholesterol also increase after menopause. If this were solely due to low estrogen, all women would get these symptoms, but they don't. Women with pre-existing *doshic* imbalances and an accumulation of metabolic toxins (*ama*) are the ones who experience menopausal difficulties.

Ayurveda takes an individualized approach to menopause according to the elemental imbalance responsible. Regular purification regimes (*panchakarma*), exercise, and a whole-food diet before menopause are the best safeguard against later menopausal discomfort. Herbs to balance hormones include rose flowers, *shatavari*, fennel, licorice, lotus seeds, cumin, wild yam, red clover, *punarnava*, alfalfa, flaxseed oil, dong quai, Siberian ginseng, sage, and castor root. Supervised vaginal douches (*uttara vasti*) with oil or infusions of *neem*, *triphala*, or aloe vera can help cleanse the uterus.

### **Lifestyle changes**

Effective menopause strategies depend on whether there is a *vata*, *pitta*, or *kapha* imbalance. *Vata* menopausal symptoms include dryness, insomnia, osteoporosis, and anxiety. *Pitta* problems are heavy bleeding, impatience, hot flashes, and acne rosacea. *Kapha* symptoms may involve weight gain, water retention, depression, raised cholesterol, and fatigue. These can all be addressed by following the appropriate diet for the affected *dosha*. Following Ayurvedic daily regimes such as self-massage, yoga, and meditation can help the body maintain a natural homeostasis.

Hormone replacement therapy is an option for women who are in a high-risk category for osteoporosis, heart disease, and high cholesterol. It should be an educated choice made with an awareness of possible side effects, such

as breast cancer, gall bladder disease, weight gain, and higher blood pressure. But natural plant hormones combined with purification therapies are often sufficient to support the body in making a smooth and healthy transition. Foods and supplements that can assist the process include vitamins A, B, C, E; and calcium, magnesium, and zinc. Boron, a mineral that boosts estrogen levels, is present in almonds, hazelnuts, grapes, dates, peaches, honey, apples, pears, and soybeans. Greens such as cabbage, brussels-sprouts, and broccoli are also estrogenic and antioxidant.

### **Case study**

Bernadette started to skip periods at age 53. She was a *vata-pitta* constitution with high blood pressure. After one year her periods stopped completely, and she started to experience hot flashes, dry skin and hair, and irritable feelings. Her following a *vata-and-pitta*-pacifying diet helped stabilize the symptoms. She also practiced self-massage, meditation, and yoga or swimming daily. Bernadette thrived on a combination of licorice, *shatavari*, dong quai, and castor roots in a ghee medium. Sage tea helped to soothe the hot flashes. She was advised to check her bone density and triglycerides annually.

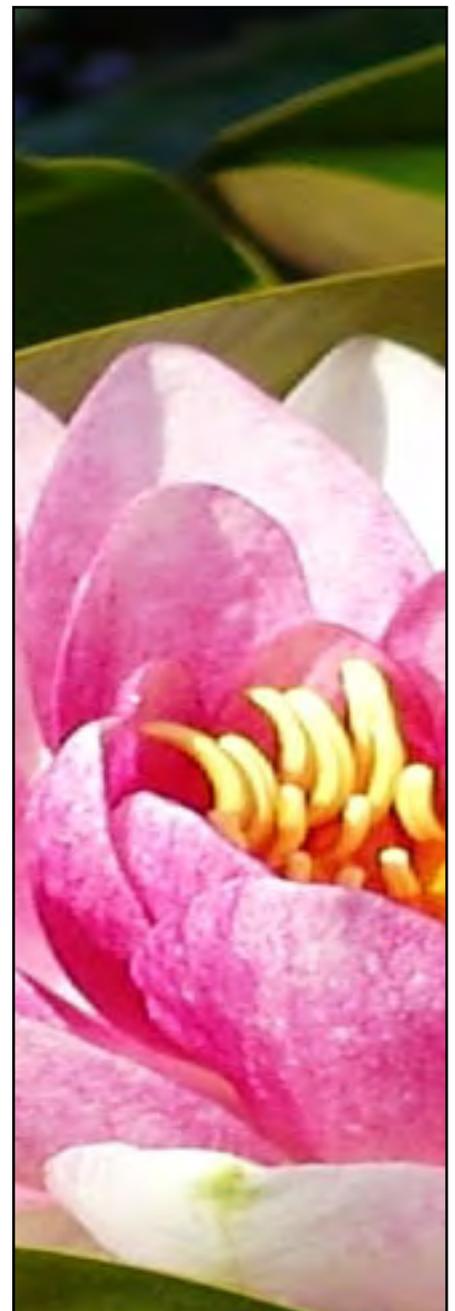
### **Menstrual problems**

Ayurveda offers practical tips on handling the monthly menses. The (average) 450 periods a woman experiences in a lifetime are a valuable purification of the blood and the uterus. A healthy menstrual cycle depends on the proper functioning of the endocrine glands in stimulating hormone secretions and of the liver and gastro-intestinal tract in breaking down and eliminating them. Effective herbs for cramps include cramp bark, asafetida, wild yam, kava kava, valerian, raspberry leaf, aloe vera gel, and ginger. Castor oil taken before periods can help to ease congestive pain. Heavy periods are reduced with anti-*pitta* liver and uterine tonics like *shatavari*, licorice, coriander, *punarnava*, *musta*, and *ashwagandha*.

### **Lifestyle changes**

Cultivating healthy habits throughout the month makes the monthly period easier to deal with. Regulated sleep, daily self-

massage, regular exercise, and a positive attitude all help. Avoid animal fats, alcohol, eggs, sugar, salt, yellow cheese, tea, coffee, soft drinks, fried foods, chocolate, cold foods and drinks, and recreational drugs. Helpful foods include mono-unsaturated cold pressed oils, seeds, fresh fruit, vegetables, split mung dal, and whole grains. Try to reduce activity and stress for the first three days, enjoy a light and liquid diet, avoid strenuous exercise, abstain from sex, and prefer sanitary pads to tampons as this facilitates a more complete flow. Baths in soothing essential oils such as chamomile, geranium, rosemary, fennel, and sweet marjoram



can reduce cramps. Abdominal castor oil packs on the stomach can also relieve pain. Helpful supplementation for some includes vitamins A, C, E, and B complex; and bioflavonoids, iron, and zinc.

### Case study

26-year-old Natalie experienced painful periods and constipation for a year. Natalie's doctor had advised her to start taking contraceptive pills, but she was afraid of the increased long-term risk of side effects such as breast cancer, liver tumors, skin pigmentation, and weight gain. Instead, she adjusted her diet and took a tea of cramp bark, castor roots, fennel, and *shatavari* one week before periods. Magnesium, calcium, B6, and zinc were also taken to help normalize muscle contractions.

### Migraine

People predisposed to migraine attacks tend to be sensitive to particular stimuli. As with headaches, the key is to identify the trigger and avoid it whenever possible. Bright light, sun, smells, suppressed emotions, food allergens, and chemical sensitivity are just some of the possible exacerbating factors. Premenstrual migraines are possibly due to an increased fluid retention in the brain. To increase one's resistance to triggers, and to subdue the *vata* and *pitta* root of many migraines, internal medicines are prescribed. Common ones include milk, ghee, saffron, sandalwood, valerian, urad dal, feverfew, wood betony, white willow bark, and *crataeva religiosa*.

### Lifestyle changes

Allergy testing can help to isolate the cause of migraines. Common allergens include chocolate, citrus, caffeine, cheese, wine, food preservatives, monosodium glutamate, peanuts, wheat, smoked meats, yeast, food colorings, benzoic acid, and the contraceptive pill. Since heat can often aggravate a migraine, it is best to wear sunglasses and a hat if exposed to the sun, but it is better to avoid the midday sunlight if possible. At the initial sign of a migraine, massage the head with sesame oil, retire to a quiet and dark room, and pull the earlobes down whilst yawning to release blood vessel pressure. Inducing vomiting with warm salty water can give instant relief in some

cases. A few drops of warm ghee up the nostrils may help with *vata*-predominant migraines.

### Case study

Rob experienced feverish migraines for three continuous days every month for six years. Pulse diagnosis identified the liver as the root cause. He was given the liver herbs: dandelion root, *punarnava* and *chitraka*, along with *panchakarma* purification therapies to cleanse toxins from the liver.

### Overweight

Ayurveda believes that a healthy weight is achieved when a person is healthy. There are no artificial standards for an ideal weight. People with a *kapha* constitution will naturally be a little heavier as a result of their slower metabolism, which makes them gain weight easily and lose it slowly. Weight gain is not always healthy, however, as it may indicate water retention, hypothyroidism, or *ama* accumulation. Whatever the cause, the focus should be on losing waste rather than weight. An ideal weight is when a person can access optimal stamina, fitness, and health. The weight of a waif-like model may be perfectly natural and effortless for a *vata*-type constitution, but is dangerously depleting for a *kapha* or *pitta* constitution. Carrying a bit of extra weight can promote greater longevity, providing a reserve to help counter the *vata* years of old age. Along with diet, exercise, and mental attitude, Ayurveda has some powerful fat- and toxin-reducing herbs to facilitate weight loss. These include *triphala* (*amalaki*, *bhibitaki*, and *haritaki*), Indian myrrh, *vidanga*, turmeric, fenugreek, ginger, *asana*, and *acacia catechu*.

### Lifestyle changes

Overeating and under-exercising are the simple reasons behind most weight gain. Food can be abused as a tool to repress uncomfortable emotions. *Pitta* body-types tend to overeat to suppress feelings of stress or frustration. *Vata* constitutions use food as a diversion from anxiety and fear. *Kapha* types commonly eat for comfort, or as a love substitute when lonely, depressed, or bored. The best way to overcome this automatic behavior is to be conscious of the underlying emo-

tional hunger masked as physical hunger. Awareness before and during eating by chewing well, breathing, remaining silent, and eating away from diversions such as television, help one focus on the body's and mind's responses to the process. Avoiding snacking, eating a regular light breakfast, a substantial lunch, and an early dinner all assist the body in digesting food. Try to get a variety of food, including all six tastes — sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, salty, and astringent. Seeking alternative sources of energy and pleasure helps one cultivate a taste for life rather than trying to get it solely from food. Walking on the earth, soaking up some sun, breathing in ocean air, and pursuing an engrossing hobby can all help one to reduce dependence on food for vitality and stimulation.

A liquid juice or vegetable fast one day a week can aid the liquefaction and elimination of toxins from the system. It can also help normalize metabolism and the appetite. A *kapha* diet is suitable for simple cases of weight gain. This means avoidance of animal fat, fried foods, sugar, dairy, alcohol, nuts, and eating out. Items that support weight loss include light, warm, bitter, pungent, and astringent foods. Some examples of these are apples, pears, pomegranates, cranberries, honey, beans, barley, corn, millet, buckwheat, rye, spices (except salt), asparagus, eggplant, green leafy vegetables, celery, and sprouts. Drinking warm herbal teas with honey can help to cleanse the channels and allay hunger. *Pranayama* breathing also stimulates proper digestion, assimilation, and elimination of meals.

### Case study

Dawn was a *kapha* body-type and felt comfortable with her larger athletic build. Over the past year, however, she had gained weight and felt sluggish and bloated. Dawn followed a *kapha*-reducing diet and took *triphala guggulu* before bed (a combination of ginger, gooseberry, *haritaki*, *bhibitaki*, and Indian myrrh.) She also overcame long-term depression by joining the local water polo team and creating closer friendships. Within two months Dawn was happy to reach her target weight and felt more energetic.

(continued in the next issue)



## Animal Products and Pesticides in Soft Drinks

### ● Animal Products

The Coca-Cola Company uses the word “flavors” on the ingredient label of some of its products. But that word can include animal by-products resulting from slaughter. To the question whether there is any animal slaughter involved in obtaining ingredients used in Classic Coke, The Coca-Cola Company gave the following answer.

Except for products that contain cochineal<sup>1</sup> (which is listed on the label and which is derived from smashed insects) and products that contain milk<sup>2</sup> (also indicated on the label), brands of The Coca-Cola Company in the United States do not contain any ingredient derived from animals. Please check your labels.

However, some of our juice products contain vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, which is derived from lanolin. Lanolin is a natural oil in the fiber of sheep’s wool. It is separated from the wool after the sheep’s hair is cut. Lanolin oil is thus obtainable without slaughtering the animal. Still, this ingredient may remain an issue for strict vegetarians.

Additionally, some of our suppliers use a common industry practice for grape juice clarification that does involve animal by-products. This practice is becoming increasingly less common as ultra-filtration systems are gradually replacing the gelatin used in this process. However, the gelatin used to clarify the juice is made from fish, and therefore our juices are certified kosher. Our advice: read labels carefully.

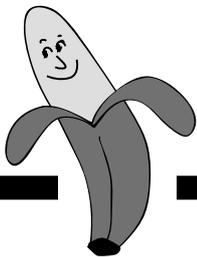
### ● Pesticides

Health standard tests showed that soft drinks bottled in India by two multinational companies — PepsiCo and Coke — and sold in Delhi and around contain pesticides. “Twelve major cold drink brands sold contain a deadly cocktail of pesticide residues,” the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in New Delhi said. The tests conducted by the Pollution Monitoring Laboratory of CSE showed that all samples contained residues of four extremely toxic pesticides and insecticides: lindane, DDT, malathion, and chlorpyrifos, all of which include potent carcinogens which can cause cancers and reduce bone mineral density. Brands analysed in April-August and found to contain pesticides residues are Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Diet Pepsi, Mirinda Orange, Mirinda Lemon, Blue Pepsi, 7-Up, Coca Cola, Fanta, Limca, Sprite, and Thumbs Up.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In the U.S., the only Coca-Cola product that is currently produced with cochineal is Minute Maid Juices To Go Ruby Red Grapefruit Drink.

<sup>2</sup> The only currently manufactured Coca-Cola brand products that contain milk are Swerve, Choglit, the Fruitopia Smooth products, Slapdrinks, Tey Teas, Minute Maid BeginIt, the Planet Java products, Minute Maid Fruit and Cream Swirl frozen bars, Barq’s Frozen Root Beer & Vanilla Ice Cream Float, and the Bacardi Mixers premium ice cream.



## A Banana a Day Keeps the Doctor Away!

The sugar and fiber in bananas give an instant, sustained, and substantial energy boost. Two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90-minute workout. Bananas have four times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, three times the phosphorus, and five times the vitamin A and iron of an apple. Bananas are rich in potassium — but they can also help with a number of conditions:

**Depression:** According to a recent survey amongst people suffering from depression, many felt better after eating a banana. Bananas contain tryptophan, a protein that the body converts into serotonin, which relaxes, improves mood, and makes us feel happier. For this reason, they can also help sufferers of seasonal affective disorder.

**Pre-menstrual syndrome:** Forget the pills — eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which affect your mood.

**Anemia:** High in iron, bananas stimulate hemoglobin production.

**Blood pressure:** High in potassium, low in salt, bananas are the perfect fruit to beat blood pressure. The US has just allowed the banana industry to claim officially the fruit's ability to reduce blood pressure and stroke. Eating bananas regularly can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%.

**Brainpower:** The potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making us more alert.

**Heartburn:** Bananas have an antacid effect. If suffering from heartburn, eat a banana for soothing relief.

**Smoking:** Bananas can help people give up smoking — their B6, B12, potassium, and magnesium help the body with nicotine withdrawal.

**Morning sickness:** Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

**Mosquito bites:** Try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin — it reduces swelling and irritation.

**Nerves:** Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

**Overweight and at work?** To avoid comfort eating because of stress at work (and the obesity it causes) we can keep our blood sugar levels steady by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours.

**Ulcers:** Bananas are used with intestinal disorders because of their soft smooth texture — they also neutralize over-acidity and reduce irritation.

**Stress:** Potassium helps normalize heartbeat, oxygenates the brain, and regulates the body's water balance. When stressed, our metabolic rate rises, reducing potassium levels — these can be rebalanced with the help of a high-potassium banana.



## Cell Phones

*Sunday Mirror*, U.K.

4 January 2004

Scientists have discovered that a call lasting just two minutes can alter the natural electrical activity of a child's brain for up to an hour afterwards. The study shows the shocking effect that using a mobile phone has on a child's brain. They also found how radio waves from mobile phones penetrate deep into the brain and not just around the ear.

The study has prompted medical experts to question whether it is safe for children to use mobile phones at all. Doctors fear that disturbed brain activity in children could lead to psychiatric and behavioral problems or impair learning ability.

It was the first time that human guinea pigs were used to measure the effects of mobile phone radiation on children. The tests were carried out on an 11-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl.

The scan shows how radiation spreads through the centre of the brain and out to the ear on the other side of the skull. The scans found that disturbed brainwave activity lasted for up to an hour after the phone call ended. Previously it had been thought that interference with brainwaves and brain chemistry stopped when a call ended.

Dr Gerald Hyland — a government adviser on mobiles — says he finds the results “extremely disturbing. It makes one wonder whether children, whose brains are still developing, should be

using mobile phones,” he adds. “The results show that children's brains are affected for long periods even after very short-term use. The alteration in brain waves could lead to things like a lack of concentration, memory loss, inability to learn, and aggressive behavior.”

The results coincide with a new survey that shows 87 per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds own mobile phones and 40 per cent of them spend 15 minutes or more talking each day on them. Disturbingly, 70 per cent said they would not change the use of their phone even if advised to by the Government.

He said: “This information shows there really isn't a safe amount of mobile phone use. We don't know what lasting damage is being done by this exposure. If I were a parent I would now be extremely wary about allowing my children to use a mobile even for a very short period. My advice would be to avoid mobiles.”

Dr Michael Klieseisen, who conducted the study, said: “We are worried that delicate balances that exist — such as the immunity to infection and disease — could be altered by interference with chemical balances in the brain.”

A Department of Health spokesman said: “In children mobile phone use should be restricted to very short periods of time.”



# Passive Smoking

www.ash.org.uk

June 2004

Breathing other people's smoke is called passive, involuntary, or secondhand smoking. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, many potentially toxic — some 60 are known or suspected carcinogens (cancer-causing substances). These chemicals include tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, ammonia, formaldehyde, and hydrogen cyanide. The Environmental Protection Agency, USA, classifies tobacco smoke as a "class A carcinogen" along with asbestos, arsenic, and radon gas.

Passive smoking causes declining lung function, asthma, heart disease, and lung cancer. Short term exposure to tobacco smoke has a measurable effect on the heart in non-smokers — only 30 minutes exposure reduces the coronary blood flow.

While health risks from passive smoking are smaller compared to active smoking, the overall impact is large. The British Medical Association estimates that secondhand smoke causes at least 1,000 deaths a year in the UK. However, the true figure is likely to be much higher. Professor Jamrozik of Imperial College, London, estimates that secondhand smoke causes at least 3,600 deaths annually in the UK from lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke combined. Jamrozik also estimates 49 deaths — or about 1 a week — take place in the hospitality trades from passive smoking. People working in pubs and bars are especially at risk as they are exposed to three times more smoke than a non-smoker living with a smoker. These workers are almost twice as likely to die from related diseases than those exposed to smoke at home.

For those 65 or older, passive smoking is estimated to account for 16,900 deaths annually — 9,700 are due to stroke. These estimates add more weight to the argument to ban smoking in public [in the UK]. Carol Black, president of the Royal College of Physicians notes: "Making [public places] smoke-free not only protects vulnerable staff and the public, it will also help over 300,000 people in Britain to stop smoking completely."

About 3 million people in the UK are exposed to passive smoking at work. 51% of non-smoking employees are still exposed to tobacco smoke at work, with almost a third being exposed every or most days.

Almost half of all children in the UK are exposed to tobacco smoke at home. Children have a 72% increased risk of developing respiratory illnesses (including bronchitis and pneumonia), cardiovascular impairment, reduced mental development and behavioral problems, deficits in reading and reasoning skills. They also become predisposed to developing chronic obstructive airway disease and cancer as adults.

Infants of parents who smoke are more likely to get bronchitis and pneumonia in the first year of life — 17,000+ children under five are admitted to hospitals annually because of passive smoking. Babies exposed to their mother's tobacco smoke before they are born have reduced lung function and low birth weight. Parental smoking is also a risk factor for cot deaths.

---

## Rules for Enlightenment and Happiness: Yama & Niyama *(continued from page 11)*

ing, sleeping, recreation, and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

*(Bg. 6.16–17)*

Ultimately, however, the secret of success in any yogic practice is to obtain a higher taste. Everyone seeks material happiness because happiness is part of the nature of the soul. Happiness equated with the unrestricted gratification of the material senses and mind is sure to entangle us in subsequent painful reactions. Sense gratification is limited and temporary. We cannot enjoy it perpetually, but must renounce it after some time. But when we achieve the spiritual platform, happiness is *rasamrta-sindhu* — perpetual and unlimited.

Beginners in yoga cannot expect the practice of restriction (*yama* and *niyama*) to always be pleasant. The comparison is made to a person with jaundice: he will not taste the sweetness of sugar-candy, but instead will think it tastes bitter. Nevertheless, one treatment for jaundice is the regular consumption of sugar-candy. When the disease is over, the patient again tastes

sugar-candy as sweet. Therefore Lord Krishna says (*Bg. 18.37*):

That which in the beginning may be just like poison but at the end is just like nectar and which awakens one to self-realization is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness.

Srila Prabhupada comments:

In the pursuit of self-realization, one has to follow many rules and regulations to control the mind and the senses and to concentrate the mind on the self. All these procedures are very difficult, bitter like poison, but if one is successful in following the regulations and comes to the transcendental position, he begins to drink real nectar, and he enjoys life.

The main rule for spiritual advancement is to always engage in the Lord's devotional service. This begins by fixing the mind in hearing and chanting about His name form, qualities, and pastimes, and by engaging our senses in eating the remnants of food lovingly offered to Him.

**Chant:**

HARE KRISHNĀ HARE KRISHNĀ  
KRISHNĀ KRISHNĀ HARE HARE  
HARE RĀMĀ HARE RĀMĀ  
RĀMĀ RĀMĀ HARE HARE

***...and be happy!***

*Hope This Meets You  
— in Good Health —*

*The Newsletter of the ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry*

***If undeliverable, please return to:***

ISKCON Radhadesh  
Château de Petite Somme 5  
6940 Septon (Durbuy)  
Belgium

***Changing your address?***

Please send your new address to:

**ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry**  
ISKCON Radhadesh  
Château de Petite Somme 5  
6940 Septon (Durbuy)  
Belgium

e-mail: [health@pamho.net](mailto:health@pamho.net) • web: [www.iskcon.com](http://www.iskcon.com)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Country .....