

*Hope this Meets You  
— in Good Health —*

The Newsletter of the ISKCON Health and Welfare Ministry



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Recently I have received some inquiries about the Widows' ashrama in Vrindavan, India.

In 1982, the GBC gave the Health and Welfare Ministry, (which at that time was known as the Health and Welfare Committee), some land with a building for the devotional service of elderly ladies that are widows within ISKCON. It is now known as the 'Kirtan Ashrama', a block from the Krsna Balarama Mandir. I am happy devotees have shown some concern, but concern is not enough to make the project a reality. What is needed more than anything else are devotees who will make this project their mission and see that it manifests into something concrete.

I feel that it is ultimately the duty of each temple within ISKCON to see to the welfare of the devotee "from bhaktin or bhakta program to samadhi". It would be auspicious, however, to have some accommodations for elderly devotees who want to spend their remaining years concentrating their minds in Krsna consciousness and pure devotional service in the holy dhamas.

Presently there is a house at the Kirtan Ashrama, but it would be more suitable for the project to construct a new house, which would cost probably around US\$150,000. We also need an administrator, nurses and attendants. If anyone has an interest to do some practical service for such a project please contact me at <Prahlanananda.Swami@pamho.net>.

Hare Krsna

## Hope This Meets You — in Good Health —

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Issue No. 7

February 2001

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### 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.

# Quotes from Acaryas about Health

## MATERIAL BODY NEEDED FOR DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

“Without the material body one cannot cultivate devotional service. So there is no benefit if one renounces the activities that are needed to maintain the physical body, thinking them to be the source of misery and lust. The fruits of those activities, which are the source of misery for others, are therefore enjoyed by the devotees, who condemn them as insignificant. They worship Krsna with devotion and firm faith while enjoying the fruits of their work as they fulfill the necessities of life.”

(Sri Bhaktyaloka, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Page 51 Utsaha)

## MORNING WALKS

Prabhupada: If he walks early in the morning, all his disease will be cured. That he will not do. After all, everyone can do after performing mangala arati, take a morning walk.

(Morning Walk — April 23, 1974, Hyderabad)

Prabhupada: Yes. If you rise early and take a walk, all your ailments will be cured.

(Morning Walk — April 23, 1974, Hyderabad)

Prabhupada: We have got activities day and night, but because the body is there, we have to eat, but we eat Krsna prasadam. And naturally we go to sleep, to take some rest. Otherwise we are always engaged in Krsna's business. We have no other business. So I go in the morning for little morning walk because the body, whole day if I sit down, it may be jammed.

(Room Conversation — April 23, 1976, Melbourne)

Prabhupada: Oh, yes. I was going to morning walk when there was snow fall. I was walking on snow.

(Room Conversation with Life Member, Mr. Malhotra — December 22, 1976, Poona)

In our childhood with my father I used to walk 10 miles to save a ticket of 5 paise on the tram car. So we are trained up in that way. Of course it was a very pleasant morning walk.

(Letter to: Tamala Krsna — London 1 September, 1971)

## EVERYTHING FOR KRSNA

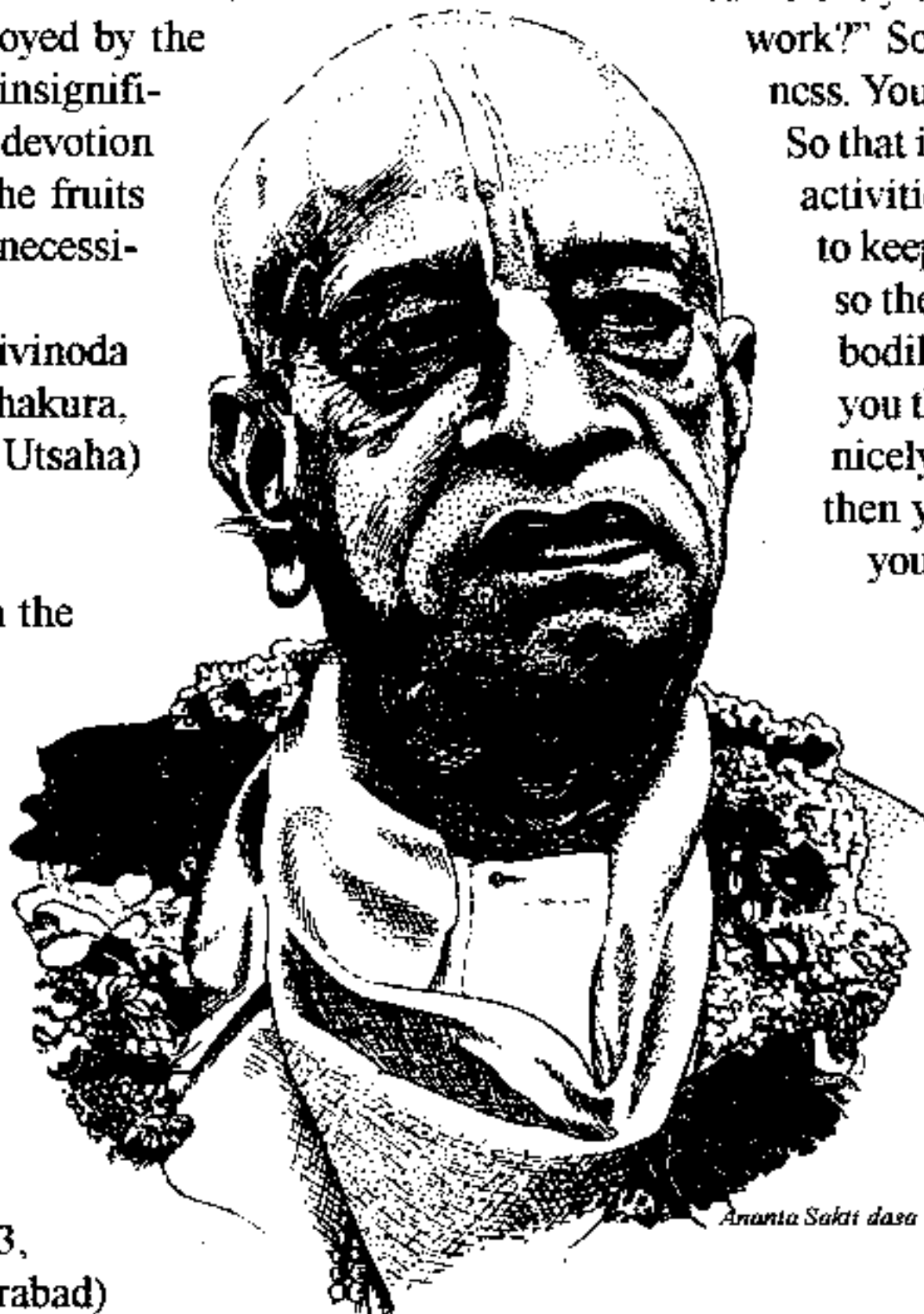
It is not... Because your cooking business is not stopped.

Simply the mode of thinking has to be changed. That's all. A small technique, that “I am earning for God. I am cooking for God. I am eating also for God. I am eating also for God.” How is that eating you are...? “Now, because my body is dedicated to the service of the Lord, if I don't eat

sufficiently to keep my body fit, then how can I work?” So your eating is also God consciousness. Your sleeping is also God consciousness. So that is the way. We have to mold our life's activities. Now, when I think that “I have to keep this body fit for working for God,” so then that is not, I mean to... That is not bodily conception of life. Just like when you think that “My car has to be kept very nicely so that I can take nice work for it,” then you are not identified with your car; you simply want to take some service of

the car. Similarly, if you think that “This body is required for acting, for working on behalf of the Supreme Lord; therefore I must keep the body fit to work,” so that is not your identification with the body. But if I use this body for sense gratification and therefore I make my body stout and strong to enjoy sense enjoyment, that is the cause of my bondage.

(Bhagavad-gita 2.48-49 — New York, April 1, 1966)



## PURE IN MIND AND HYGIENIC IN BODY

Bhismadeva advised for all human beings nine qualifications: (1) not to become angry, (2) not to lie, (3) to equally distribute wealth, (4) to forgive, (5) to beget children only by one's legitimate wife, (6) to be pure in mind and hygienic in body, (7) not to be inimical toward anyone, (8) to be simple, and (9) to support servants or subordinates. One cannot be called a civilized person without acquiring the above-mentioned preliminary qualities.

(SB 1.9.26)

## RELIEF FROM BODILY AND SPIRITUAL DISEASES

“As Murari Gupta treated his patients, by his mercy both their bodily and spiritual diseases subsided.”

## PURPORT

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 dis

Please turn to page 9 . . .

# India Insight

by Caroline Robertson (Raga Manjari devi dasi)

**Y**ou've just returned from India—*punya-bhumi*, the land of pious living—and it isn't long before someone asks you the inevitable question: "Did you get sick?" If you tempered your trip with a little preparation and took precautions, you have a much better chance of being able to reply with an unexpected "I'm healthier now than I was when I left."

India's reputation as a hotbed of disease, poverty, and overcrowding makes some people sick at just the thought of a visit. Who can know what to expect in the land of the unexpected?

I still vividly recall my maiden voyage there. At 17 years I saw it as a rite of passage, a journey I was compelled to take to face my demons and reveal my strengths. I was egged on after reading Ruth Prawler Jhabvala's character of the Major in *Heat and Dust* giving the heroine, Olivia, a prudent warning: "There are many ways of loving India, many things to love her for—the scenery, the history, the poetry, the music and indeed the physical beauty of the men and the women, but all are dangerous for the European who allows himself to love too much. India always finds out the weak spot and presses on it."

For many the weak spot is their

health.

In preparation, I studied myself into a disease-phobic paranoid frenzy. AIDS, amoebic dysentery, cholera, gi-

clearer about the real dangers to guard against in India, and they're simpler than most people think.

"I'm happy to be purified of my sinful *karma*." I

couldn't believe the calm acceptance of the girl whose savage boil I was treating. While managing a holistic health clinic in beautiful West Bengal by Mother Ganga over four years, I was amazed at the varying attitude of my patients toward illness. A pattern that clearly emerged was that fear and anxiety will make you sicker than any external agent. Conversely, faith and acceptance of the body's innate healing powers and rites of purification led to accelerated, uncomplicated recoveries.

Also, over those four years I am happy to say

rdia, malaria, polio, rabies, typhoid, tetanus, tuberculosis, and worms invaded my pre-departure dreams. The thought of needles was even more terrifying.

So with great trepidation, puncture-free arms, and ten kilos of natural medicine I set off for battle. (Just to get the medicine on the plane I had to pretend I was taking it over for a charitable mission!)

So what happened that trip? Well, I didn't reach enlightenment—still in the queue for that one! But I did start a love affair with India that over thirteen years has suffered all the stages of a temperamental marriage. I also got much

that not only did I escape the clutches of those virulent diseases, but so did nearly all the thousands of patients I treated, locals and travelers alike. I did see a lot of diarrhea, influenza, and mild respiratory infections, however, most of which could have been prevented with more attention to protecting the immune system (*ojas*) and healthier eating habits (*aharam*). To my delight, I also found that most conditions can be prevented and treated very effectively with natural medicine. This approach also has fewer complications than the allopathic alternative, which tends to block the channels and burden the organs with synthetic chemi-



cals and a backwash of *ama*. Of course, Western medicine has its place. If necessary to resort to, it's certainly preferable to get treatment from a private nursing home rather than an Indian public hospital (nightmare on Gandhi Marg!)

Understanding how to protect our health and nurse it through difficult patches is incredibly empowering. I hope the following suggestions will give you several useful tips so you will be confident in your travels and enjoy first-class health all the way.

#### **BUILD UP YOUR IMMUNITY**

Nothing beats superb preparation if you want to stay healthy on the road. Creating a strong immune system is the surest safeguard against illness. You can take the following measures before and during your trip to minimize the risk of illness.

(A little prayer to Sri Ganesha or Sri Narasimha wouldn't hurt, either!)

- Depart for your trip in a relaxed, rested, fit, and healthy state.
- Cultivate a positive mental attitude, visualizing yourself having a happy and fulfilling trip.
- Take the maximum recommended dose of ascorbic acid or calcium ascorbate or triphala daily for a month before departure and during your trip
- Take neem-leaf powder or tablets at least two weeks before departure if you are going to a malaria-endemic region.
- You may want to take fluid echinacea extract as an immune-stimulant.
- Take acidophilus powder before and during your trip to guard against intestinal disturbances.
- Consider taking homeopathic vaccinations, especially if you are going to a disease-epidemic region. These come in tablet or liquid form.

**THE HOMEOPATHIC IMMUNIZATIONS ADVISED FOR INDIA ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

**Cholera:** Chin mur 0/1-0/6 or 200.

**Malaria:** Malaria officinalis 200 (Nat mur 200 and China officinalis are sometimes used also). Sudarshan churna and Neem tablets are also used as a malaria preventative.

**Polio:** Lathyrus sativus 30.

**Tetanus:** Tetanus toxin 1 M Dose.

**Typhoid:** Typhoidinum 1 M.

Seek advice from your homeopath as to dosage.

#### **FIRST AID KIT**

Most of these things are available in India, but in case you are immobile or in transit, it's handy to have them near by.

- Electrolyte formula: "Gastrolyte," available from the chemist; black-currant formula is tasty for kids. Known as Electral in India.

Essential to rehydrate body after diarrhea, vomiting, or excessive perspiration.

- Ginger powder: ¼ tsp to be added to a glass of water and taken for travel sickness or general nausea.

- Charcoal tabs: Absorbs gas and toxins, allaying diarrhea.

- Vilvadi lehyam: A tasty, spicy jam, which is a strong stomachic and digestive, prevents bacterial, fungal, and viral infections.

- Black Walnut Hulls: Strong anti-amoebic and anti-parasitic medicine, to be taken in case of intestinal parasites, amoebas, worms, or bacteria. Available from health food store.

- Viburnum opulu (Cramp bark): A powerful anti-spasmodic herb that stops cramping and abdominal pain effectively. To be taken in cases of cramping diarrhea or menses.

- Euphorbia Hirta: A powerful anti-amoebic herb. To be taken in cases of amoebic dysentery.

- Grapefruit seed extract: Anti-amoebic, anti-parasitic, anti-bacterial, and anti-oxidant; not to be confused with grape-seed extract.

- Acidophilus tabs: Available from a health food store. To be taken as directed on the bottle in case of digestive upset or after taking any allopathic medication.

- Tea-tree oil (concentrated): Strong antiseptic and anti-fungal agent, to be used externally for cuts and infections.

- Antibiotic cream or Jatyadi ghee:

Sometimes essential for advanced infections. Apply as directed on tube.

- Antibiotic ear drops or Vacha lasundi Ayurvedic ear drops: Essential to treat an ear infection in the advanced stages. Available at a pharmacy.

- Paracetamol: To be taken as directed on packet only when a high fever cannot be reduced after some time.

- Camphor crystals: To deter bed bugs. Sprinkle around perimeter of bed.

#### **Homeopathic Medicines**

- Acontium Napellus 200
  - First stage of fever, flu, or fright.
- Arnica Montana 200 and Cream
  - Injuries, falls, blows, contusions, bruises.

- Arsenicum Album 200
  - Burning pain in the stomach, with great thirst for cold drinks; restless, diarrhea.

- Belladonna 200
  - Fever with hot, red skin and throbbing head, swollen tonsils.

- Camphor 30
  - Collapse with icy coldness of body, pulse small, and low blood pressure from loss of vital fluids, e.g., diarrhea, hemorrhage.

- Cantharis 30 and Cream
  - Burns and burning pain.

- Cina 200
  - Worms.

- Cuprum Metallicum 200
  - Spasms and cramps with diarrhea or menses.

- Ipecacuanha 30
  - Persistent nausea and vomiting, frothy green diarrhea, cough with frothy mucus.

- Mag Phos 200
  - Cramps, convulsions, neuralgic pains and spasms that improve with pressure.

- Nux Vomica 200
  - Good at the first suspicion that food disagreed with you, uncomfortable digestion, headache.

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# Healing Seasons

Dr Shaun Matthews

In Ayurveda, the traditional system of healing practiced in India over the past 5,000 years, *ritu charya* or seasonal regimens are considered one of the foundations for maintaining good health. It has long been recognized that our individual constitutions or body-types are affected by changes in nature throughout the yearly cycle. Most of us have experienced how a cold, overcast day affects us differently from a warm sunny day or how several days of cold gusty winds can unsettle our nervous systems.

Ayurveda utilizes the simple but elegant principle that 'like increases like' to understand how the seasons will affect the energetic forces, known as doshas, in Ayurveda, of our body or mind. For example, the hotter and more humid it is in summer and the more intense the sunlight is, this will increase *pitta dosha*, which is hot, moist and intense in its nature. Someone with a predominance of *pitta dosha* in their constitution accordingly is likely to experience difficulties with overeating and irritability in the summer months. If *pitta dosha* is then further aggravated by mental or physical stresses then they may experience fever, red skin rashes, stomach acidity or outbursts of anger.

Applying this principle further we can see that individuals with a lot of *vata dosha*, which is changeable, light, cold and dry, in their constitution are more likely to run into health problems in the autumn months and during the change of the seasons. Someone with excessive *kapha dosha* in their constitution, which is cold, moist, heavy and

stable, will need to be more cautious in the late winter and springtime if they are to avoid colds, hay fever and fluid retention. In this way the season to be most vigilant about is the one that cor-

responds to the individual constitution. work to pacify aggravated doshas in our constitutions before a disease can manifest.

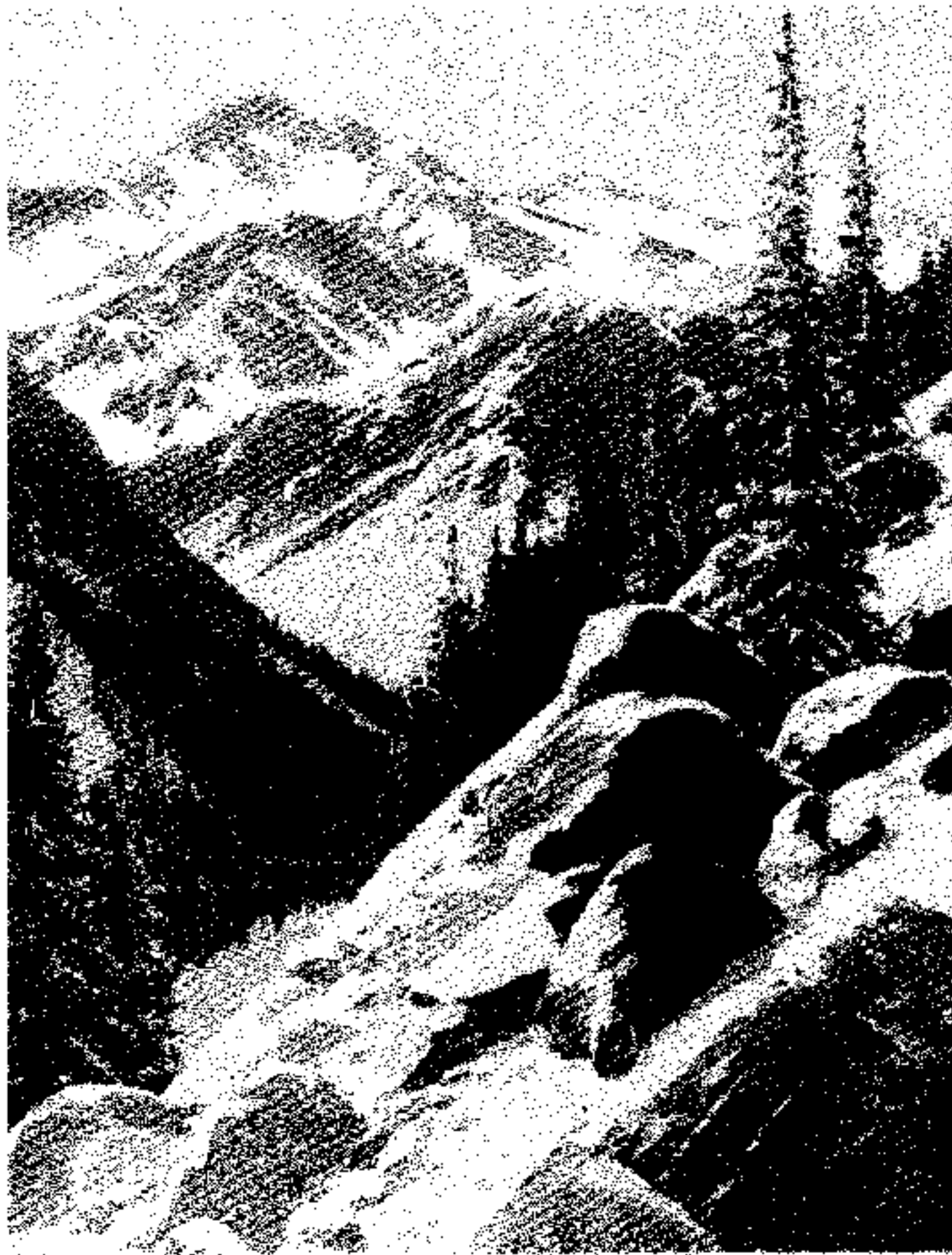
In order to balance the body's energies throughout the seasons of the year it is useful to follow the guidelines outlined below, though it is also important that we are not too rigid in their adherence or guilt-stricken if we have temporary lapses. That would certainly be contrary to the flexible spirit of Ayurveda. Ayurveda is inherently an intuitive science so these guidelines are best used to support a more intuitive approach to food, drinks, and activities.

**Ritu charya for Summer Diet:** A *pitta* pacifying diet is best followed favoring sweet, bitter and astringent tastes. *Agni* (digestive fire) is reduced in summer so overeating needs to be avoided. Salads and fresh green vegetables are cooling and best taken at lunchtime when the digestion is strongest, in order to avoid creating gas.

**Herbs:** Hot and spicy herbs should be avoided such as ginger, black pepper, chili and cayenne pepper. Cooling herbs can be taken including fennel and coriander leaves and seeds.

**Drinks:** Caffeine and alcohol tend to increase *Pitta dosha*. Ice-cold and iced drinks are best avoided as these depress the digestive fire and thus pave the way for toxin accumulation. A good afternoon drink is watermelon juice with mint leaves and a squeeze of lime juice.

**Activities:** Sunbathing is best avoided and hard work under the sun will aggravate *pitta*. A well ventilated hat and protection for the neck is important to



responds to the individual constitution. In general terms watch out for; summer for *pitta* dominated body-types, autumn and early winter for *vata* dominated body-types and late winter and spring for *kapha* body-types.

Ayurveda places great importance on preventive medicine. The ancient texts emphasize that we should never wait until a disease has manifested in order to treat it. There's a saying by Chanakya Pandita that warns, "never delay in attending to three things; fire, debt and disease". *Doshic* imbalances need to be addressed as soon as they occur. In this way seasonal routines

prevent overheating. Sunglasses should only be used in summer during the brightest part of the day as authorities in Ayurveda maintain that constant use decreases visual acuity.

Swimming is excellent exercise in summer especially river bathing or even being close to aquatic and maritime environments. Washing off salt

***“It has long been recognized that our individual constitutions or body-types are affected by changes in nature throughout the yearly cycle.”***

after ocean swims also helps to prevent *pitta dosha* imbalances.

Cool evening walks under the moonlight are especially recommended for pacifying *pitta* as is the wearing of cotton and silk. Cooling colors are white, gray, blue, purple and green. Clothes should be loose fitting and allow the skin to breathe. The wearing of white flower garlands such as frangipani and gardenias also help to balance *pitta*. Early nights are recommended, i.e. retiring before 11 pm. Oil massage with coconut oil is generally recommended depending on one's constitution.

#### **Ritu charya for Autumn and Early Winter**

**Diet:** A *vata* pacifying diet is recommended favoring sweet, sour and salty tastes. Food should be well cooked and easy to digest. It should be served warm and heavier, oilier food is appropriate. Dry food such as popcorn, raw vegetables and night shades [i.e. eggplant, potatoes and tomatoes] should be minimized. Frozen foods and iced drinks will aggravate *vata*.

**Herbs:** Most warming herbs and spices balance *vata dosha* though very drying spices such chili, mustard seed and black pepper should be taken in moderation.

**Drinks:** Meals should be accompanied by plenty of warm liquids; a good tea for pacifying *Vata dosha* is made with equal parts of ginger, cinnamon and

cardamom.

Alternatively chamomile or licorice tea or hot water is excellent.

**Activities:** *Vata dosha* is specifically increased by too much jogging, cycling, exercising and by working too hard. Rushing to be on time, long hours of study, staying up late at night and too much loud rock music or noise will aggravate *vata*. Excessive talking, shouting, crying and laughing will also do the same.

In order to decrease *vata* we need to cease activity and this includes driving and flying. Sleep and rest pacifies *vata*. Meditation is also excellent. As *vata* is cool, one should be careful to avoid draughts and keep warm. Natural fibers such as wool are advocated. Oil massage with sesame oil is wonderful for pacifying *vata dosha*, with particular attention to rubbing oil into the soles of the feet and into the scalp. Performed before bedtime this helps one to relax and promotes a sound sleep.

Colors that pacify *vata* are red, orange and yellow. White is also soothing to the nervous system. Drinking a cup of warm milk before bedtime is good in autumn and winter together with a pinch of cardamom, ginger or nutmeg. One should ideally be in bed by 10 pm.

#### **Ritu charya for Late Winter and Spring**

**Diet:** A *kapha* pacifying diet should be followed with an emphasis on food that is lighter, drier and less oily. Warm food is preferable, whereas food such as avocado, bananas, cucumber and dairy products should be minimized. One should favor tastes that are pungent, bitter and astringent. A good practice is to chew roasted cumin and fennel seeds after meals.

**Herbs:** Ginger is an excellent herb at this time of year as are other warming spices such as black pepper, mustard seeds, garlic and cinnamon.

**Drinks:** An excellent digestive tea can be made with equal parts of ginger, cinnamon and mint. Another good *Kapha* tea is 1/4 tsp. dry ginger, 1/8 tsp. clove, 1/4 tsp. fenugreek and 1/4 tsp. of dill that can be sweetened with honey as

desired. Drinking hot water with a teaspoon of honey also helps pacify *kapha dosha*. Cold drinks and ice cream should be avoided.

**Activities:** Spring is a time for enjoying the outdoors, re-connecting with the joys of nature and being more physical and active. No wonder gym memberships are up 200% at this time of year!

Gardening, walks in parks with your children and days at the beach are all recommended. Taking time just to simply be with the blossoming flowers and singing birds is a great discipline especially amongst the rush of city living.

Sleeping during the day aggravates *kapha* and dampens the digestive fire. As a habit it is more likely to bring on *kapha* illnesses such as hay fever, sinusitis and bronchitis. Air conditioning is also more likely to provoke *kapha dosha* at this time of year.

Oil massage using small amounts of safflower oil or a dry besan flour massage or skin brushing is recommended. A warm shower to remove excess oil

***“Ayurveda places great importance on preventive medicine. The ancient texts emphasize that we should never wait until a disease has manifested in order to treat it . . . Doshic imbalances need to be addressed as soon as they occur.”***

can follow this. Cotton clothing is preferable and the wearing of the colors such as pink, orange, yellow and violet.

Dr Shaun Mathews originally trained in western medicine, later studied Ayurveda and Yoga in India. Over the last 2 years he has been writing and developing the Diploma of Ayurvedic Healing at Nature Care College at St. Leonards in Sydney.

He returned to private practice in January 2000 and can be contacted through Nature Care College on 9438 3333.

# Keen on Neem

by Jason Chandler

In India neem is known as “the bestower of health” or “the village pharmacy,” but its glories have only recently spread outside the subcontinent.

What makes a plant so special that multinational corporations are competing to patent its extracts, inciting outraged allegations of biopiracy from ecologists and herbalists worldwide?

For thousands of years, millions of Indians have exalted neem for its miraculous healing powers. Its original Sanskrit name, *nimba*, meaning “bestower of health,” is no exaggeration, and now its reputation as “the village pharmacy” is beginning to spread to the West.

One who travels around India cannot miss the neem trees that appear in practically every village and town (there are an estimated 18 million throughout the country<sup>1</sup>).

Neem, *Azadirachta indica*, is an incredibly hardy and fast-growing plant bursting with medicinal properties. Ancient Ayurvedic texts have described the much-venerated neem tree and its uses for the last five thousand years. All parts of the tree are valuable, each having various applications in health care and agriculture.

Considering neem’s multifarious qualities, if I were allowed to take only one medicine to a deserted island, I would confidently choose neem without hesitation.

Neem’s main actions are as a blood purifier (*raktashodhana*), anti-micro-

bial (*krimighana*), and refrigerant (*dahaprasamala*).

The ancient texts also mention its effectiveness as a liver tonic (*yakrtuttejaka*), immune stimulant (*balya*), wound healer (*vrnaropaka*), digestive stimulant (*rochaka*), blood

post-digestive effect (*vipaka*).<sup>2</sup>

Terpenoids in the neem plant are suspected to be the most active biological constituents. The compound azadirachtin is the most widely studied. Neem also contains over 20 sulphurous compounds that give rise to its distinctive odor.

An invaluable herb to add to your medicine cabinet, neem has many preventative and curative applications.

## HEALTH CARE

### Diabetes Mellitus

There are many traditional powders (*churnas*) and decoctions (*kashayams*) containing neem that have been used to successfully treat diabetes for thousands of years.<sup>3</sup>

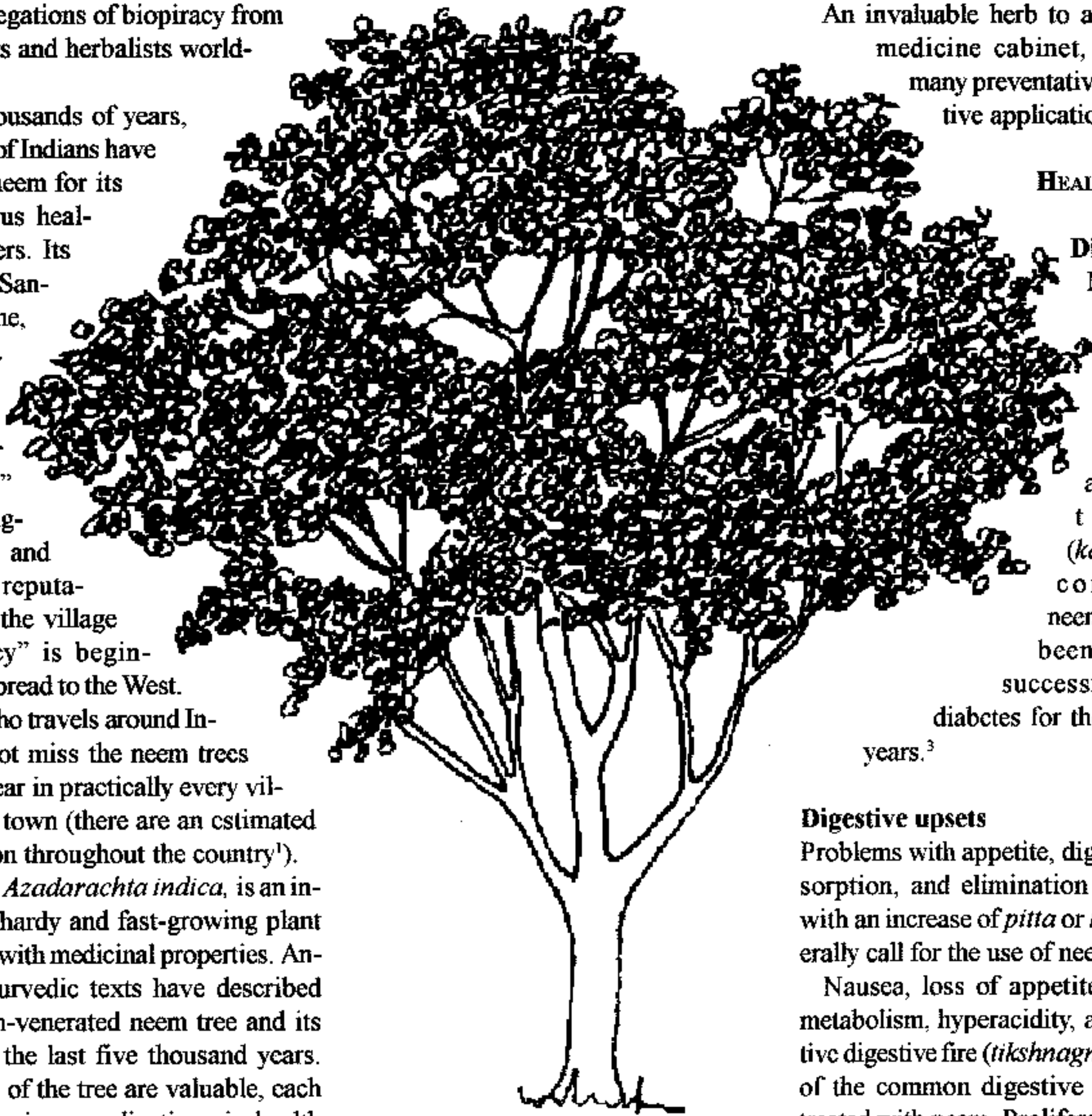
### Digestive upsets

Problems with appetite, digestion, absorption, and elimination connected with an increase of *pitta* or *kapha* generally call for the use of neem.

Nausea, loss of appetite, sluggish metabolism, hyperacidity, and overactive digestive fire (*tikshnagni*) are some of the common digestive conditions treated with neem. Proliferation of unhealthy bacteria or fungi, such as occurs with *Candida Albicans*, is likely to be widely treated with neem compounds in the future.

### Periodontal disorders

Did you know that the traditional Ayurvedic toothbrush, toothpaste, and



thinner (*kandhughna*), and eye tonic (*chaksusya*).

Regarding its specific action on the body’s elements, neem reduces *kapha* (earth & water) and *pitta* (water & fire). Its *rasa* (taste) is bitter with a cooling potency and bitter



tongue scraper is the all-in-one neem twig? Neem is an excellent anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory agent that is effective against infections of the gums, teeth, and throat.<sup>4</sup>

#### Hemorrhoids

A cream made from ghee and neem (*ghritham*), in conjunction with an internal decoction, will ease piles.<sup>5</sup>

#### Immunity

Neem is a great mosquito repellent (if you can stand the odor). Neem has also been hailed as a preventative against malaria—probably because the mosquitos can't stand it. Possibly the best Ayurvedic alternative to vaccinations and immunizations, neem is the traditional preventative against measles, chicken pox, and hepatitis.

#### Infections

Often mixed with turmeric because of the latter's antiseptic qualities, neem halts any infections dead in their tracks, particularly if they are driven by a *pitta* or *kapha* imbalance.

#### Ulcers

The cooling, soothing properties of neem act to reduce the heating and inflammatory origin of ulcerative disorders. It is often mixed with Aloe Vera juice and demulcent in this regard.<sup>6</sup>

#### Worms

A few neem leaves a day will keep the worms away more effectively than any other herb I've ever used. If kids find the taste too strong, neem tablets are available.

#### Agricultural

International interest in neem is frenzied because of its unique pesticidal, herbicidal, and fertilizing properties. Several extracts of neem have been patented in the US and Japan in recog-

***“Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Krishna Himself in the role of His own devotee, was born under a neem tree in West Bengal and was thus given the name Nimai.”***

nition of its amazing potential as a cheap and effective organic agricultural aid. Resistance against this money-grabbing monopoly has arisen, and neem has become a symbol of indigenous knowledge and the right of all people to access it.

Escalating interest and appreciation of the miracles of neem ensure that new scientific data keep arising to confirm its traditional applications. Australia's Neem Co-op is active in planting neem trees throughout Australia (it's planted over 7,000 thus far) and is dedicated to promoting the benefits of neem for all.

#### FROM THE VEDAS

Indra was returning to heaven with the nectar of immortality (*amrita*) when he spilled a drop on the neem tree, infusing it with magical healing properties.

\* \* \*

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Krishna Himself in the role of His own devotee, was born under a neem tree in West Bengal and was thus given the name Nimai. Thousands of pilgrims visit this tree every year.

#### Footnotes:

1. *Neem, A User's Manual*. K. Vijayalakshmi, K.S. Radha & Vandana Shiva. Publ. Center for Indian Knowledge Systems.
  2. *Charaka Samhita*, Su. 27/12.
  3. *Sushruta Samhita*, Ci. 11/9-“Suramehinam nimba asayakam”
  4. *Harita* Ci. 46/14- “Kwathas ca nimbamulasya danta roganivaranah”
  5. *Charaka Samhita* Ci. 14/214
  6. *Astanga Hridayam* Ut. 25/55- “Nimba patrabyan yukta sansodhanam param”
- Jason Chandler is a “neemaholic” originally from Tibet and now settled in northern NSW, Australia. He is the director of the Neem Co-op, and an Ayurvedic physician and homeopath. He may be contacted on 02-6667 1221.

#### Quotes from Acaryas about Health

... continued from page 3.

ease, 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 Krsna 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 Krsna consciousness movement supplies materially

stricken people with the medicine of the chanting of the holy name, or the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, and the 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 Krsna consciousness movement are the only established hospitals that can cure man of birth, death, old age and disease.

(Caitanya Caritamrta Adi 10.51)

# Internal Martial Arts

## A Wholistic Science for the Cultivation of Health

by Bhakta Zac (Govindadwipa, Ireland)

Everyone desires good health and vitality. Unfortunately, there are many side effects to living in suburbia with its fast food, fast life and fast money cultures. Some of these side effects include increased stress, increased inability to handle stress as well as bad digestion and circulation.

In the Vedic system of health-care (Ayurveda), it is said that the key to good health is a good digestion, as well as having a holistic approach to our activities, environment, the food we eat as well what energies we absorb. Most people these days find hatha-yoga exercises too difficult as well as too time consuming, therefore the increased interest in the oriental systems of what are called the "internal" martial arts comes as no surprise as even 15 minutes a day of very simple exercises can accomplish remarkable results.

### INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL

Firstly, it would be wise to define the differences between the "internal" and "external" martial arts.

Some of the better-known systems of external martial arts are: Karate, Judo, Tae-Kwon-do and Kung fu. There are many different schools/branches of the above-mentioned arts, with different twists on the same principles. The principals are; to defend with power and speed, as well

as countering with punches, kicks or throws.

Studies have shown that the training involved is very good in the short term as it increases stamina, agility and physical strength.



Medical science as well as holistic eastern healthcare experts has found that prolonged exposure to the rigors of such training can damage the spine, major joints of the body, the heart and other vital organs. This is due to putting too much stress on tendons, body tissues as well as increased and unnatural demands on the heart and vascular systems.

In contrast, the methods of internal martial arts such as: Tai Chi Chuan, Hsing I and Ba Gua do not put any demands on the organs and physical structure of the body for a variety of reasons. The most obvious reasons are; the body is maneuvered very gently, through a variety of slow-moving and purposeful exercises. A calm composure is maintained by breathing techniques, which increase the flow of oxygen to the brain. The breathing also helps

move the blood and chi energy (as will be discussed below) smoothly throughout one's body.

When one is training in the internal arts, the stretching exercises, self-defense techniques and countering

attacks are learnt to be applied in such a way that minimum stress is brought to the organs, muscle tissues and bones. The stretching exercises in particular are very gentle and the constant cultivation of the Chi energy can help develop fluidity in the joints and gently stretches muscle tissue, making it more supple and

elasticized. The arteries and veins take on a more relaxed and open role allowing the flow of blood to be more efficient and effective, thereby minimizing the demands on the heart.

### WHAT IS CHI?

Chi, known in the west as a "mystical" and mysterious energy, is known by other names such as KI (as in Aikido, Reiki), *Prana* (universal life force, accessed by prolonged exposure to arts such as Kundalini Yoga and Pranayama breathing techniques), and in New Age circles as "Universal life force/ energy", "Spirit" and a variety of other, flowery names.

Everyone has Chi to some extent or another, depending on his or her psychophysical make-up, according to the activities and habits of an individual, their flow of Chi energy will vary.

Chi energy flows primarily through the meridian systems of the body. It then can extend to the muscles, organs as well as the subtle body or aura/energetic/etheric body. The meridians are like lines that carry energy around the body. Most of us have serious blockages, which cause most disease. Chinese therapies such as acupuncture, acupressure and the Japanese Shiatsu are widely used to help release these blockages as well as much of your hard earned money

The Chinese practice of Chi-Gung, translated as "energy work," is a finely developed system of exercises and breathing techniques, which helps to promote the free flow of Chi energy to different organs at will, thereby contributing to the cure of different ailments such as cancer, hepatitis and other psychophysical disorders like bad backs, depression and so on. In fact, in modern day China, there are many allopathic practitioners who prescribe Chi-Gung exercises for health and recovery from major illnesses.

In the early hours of the morning in Chinese parks literally hundreds of Chinese of varying ages practice Chi-Gung and its extended forms such as Tai Chi Chuan and Ba Gua religiously and with much enthusiasm and patience.

Many elderly people in the orient have been witnessed to be as strong, if not stronger than the average "young" westerner. When combat applications are used, these mature persons demonstrate wonderful abilities.

Chi energy training is about tapping into a natural resource of energy that is possible for most people in general, its combat applications are secondary but highly effective and in some cases (depending on the ability

and experience) far surpasses the "external" martial arts techniques due to its "effortless" approach and unique energy cultivation and application.

***"Most people these days find hatha-yoga exercises too difficult as well as too time consuming . . ."***

#### **THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF CHI TRAINING**

The history of Chi-Gung and its martial expansions can be traced back to ancient India, where the *kshatriya* race (warrior and administrative class) were reputed to have an exceptional wealth of talent and stamina for fighting whilst simultaneously maintaining high moral principles and spiritual values. Fighting was only used when necessary to maintain peace and spiritual leadership.

The cultivation of Chi energy was simultaneously developed by the ancient Taoist monks in China many thousands of years ago and its secrets were kept well hidden and revealed only to a select few. The tradition has withstood the test of time and in due course, the martial aspects of Chi training evolved as a way to keep the peace and protect the monasteries/temples of the Taoist and Buddhist ascetics.

Knowledge of Chi-Gung and internal martial applications has only recently been accessible to westerners. This is due to a cultural and spiritual revolution and the increasing demand for "esoteric knowledge" and alternative therapies plus the practical and easy self-defense technologies. The ancient Taoists used Chi-Gung (formerly known as Nei-Gung) as a method to still the mind and attain a higher state of consciousness suitable for meditation.

The breathing and standing techniques in particular, promote the flow

of oxygen to the brain and body, thereby enabling the body and mind to be more relaxed. Such states cannot help but promote a feeling of well-being and peace that makes the

practice of meditation and scriptural study more focused. The increased energy levels acquired by

correct practice intensify endurance at work and increase patience to deal with problems with the minimum of stress accumulated in the psychophysical structure.

It doesn't matter what spiritual path or religion one follows, the nature of Chi training is complimentary to whatever persuasion one has. It can be and is a useful addition to many, variegated meditation techniques as well as other physical pursuits such as sports and other martial arts.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Due to the nature of the Chi energy, it is strongly advised to seek the help and support of a qualified instructor to learn these arts. As with any good thing, if misused it can be very dangerous on both the psyche and physical body.

It is recommended to study under someone who has trained directly from a master from a bona fide lineage or succession of disciples. Today's consumer society has many different brands of teachers who may or may not know what they are talking about, what to speak of how they practice themselves.

If any readers are interested I can suggest qualified teachers. I can testify that Chi training is remarkably effective for achieving increased energy and health. It promotes increased focus for the mind to engage in meditation and contemplation.

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# Kurma's Kitchen

by Kurma dasa

**H**ailed as *vishwabhesaj*-the universal medicine, ginger adds a zing to any meal and peps up your digestion at the same time.

Ginger is a very important and versatile culinary spice of wide acclaim but it's also an extremely powerful healing herb.

This rhizome, no it's not a root, is the most popular member of the *Zingiberaceae* family. Available in many varieties, from mild to spicy, ginger requires tropical conditions and fertile soil for optimum growth. A herb enjoyed by millions through history, ginger was traditionally used as an analgesic, digestive stimulant, anti-arthritic, mucolytic and expectorant.

About 50% of Ayurvedic and Chinese herbal combinations contain ginger as it facilitates the circulation and assimilation of the other herbs. The anti-nausea effect of ginger is well documented. This applies to nausea caused by morning sickness, travel or digestive upsets. As the main ingredient in a concoction I used to take as a lad for carsickness I can vouch for its effectiveness.

My first culinary experience of ginger was in 1974 in steamy West Bengal whilst visiting the holy city of Sridham Mayapur. On the first morning I joined hundreds of others sitting side-by-side, cross-legged and expectant, along the cool marble-tiled verandahs of the Chandrodaya Temple. Cool breezes wafted across the serpentine Ganges in the nearby rice paddies. This was to be my

first meal in India-the first of many memorable meals.

While I can't recall the exact menu, I can still taste the elegant yet simple entree-buttery chickpeas served with wafer-thin slices of tender young ginger drenched in fresh limejuice and sprinkled with salt. Twenty-five years later my mouth still starts to water when I remember the taste-bud tantalizing experience.

Ginger remains one of my most loved kitchen favorites. I relish its spicy sweet aroma, its invigoratingly clean, hot, sharp taste, its digestive properties and its cleansing effect on the body.

The following ginger root chutney is a tasty addition to any savory meal.  
**Fresh Ginger Root Chutney**

Preparation Time: about 10 minutes  
Yields about 1 1/2 cups

Ingredients:  
3 Tbsp fresh lime juice

1/3 cup fresh orange juice  
3/4 cup peeled fresh ginger root, coarsely chopped  
1/2 cup diced dried papaya (or sun-dried fruit of choice)  
1/2 cup fresh or dried grated coconut  
1 1/2 tsp salt

Place the lime juice and 1/2 the orange juice in a blender or food processor.

Add all the remaining ingredients and process on low speed for about one minute. Uncover and scrape down the side of the container, then add the remaining orange juice and reduce the ingredients to a smooth puree. Transfer to a ceramic or stainless steel bowl, cover until ready to serve.

Kurma is Australia's "Gourmet Guru." With a successful T.V. series and author of several cookbooks  
"Cooking with Kurma"  
"Great Vegetarian Dishes"  
"Quick Recipes".



# PRANA

## The Breath of Life

by Dr Rama Prasad and Raga Manjari devi dasi

**The empowering path to self-healing can be as simple as breathing when one learns basic yogic techniques to harness prana—the universal life force.**

### THE POWER OF PRANA

*“As the spokes are attached to the hub, so on this life breath all is connected.”*

Chandogyopanishad  
(Ancient Indian treatise)

The localized aspect of *prana* is the force uniting mind, body, and spirit together; it is known as the bio-energy field in humans. This force flows from the spirit and is also absorbed from the atmosphere instantly through breathing oxygen and slowly through the colon where the energy of food is absorbed into the body.

In the ultimate sense *prana* is the subtlest form of all vibratory energies that permeate and sustain life in the cosmos. It is the underlying power supplying all universal forces—allowing the ocean to surge, the sun to rise, flowers to bloom, and the Earth to revolve.

Absorbed through the medium of breath, *prana* has specific actions on the respiratory system, digestion, circulation, heart, and motor and sensory functions. Most importantly, *prana* governs all the mental processes, including thoughts, feelings, the will, and reason. Longevity, health, and vitality are all determined by the quality of *prana* flowing in our bodies. Healing systems such as Reiki, homoeopathy, herbalism, and bodywork create an abundant and harmonious flow of *prana* through the body, which frees the body of all disease.

In the body, *prana* travels via etheric channels known as *nadis*; Chinese medicine teaches a similar concept,

with its chi travelling along meridians.

The main *nadis* are the central staff, from the central sulcus down the spinal cord (*shushumna*), and the two channels flowing vertically around this, on the left side (*ida*) and the right (*pingala*). These *nadis* are represented in the medical caduceus symbol. According to the Siva Samhita there are 350,000 secondary *nadis* pervading the body, governing all physiological and psychological processes.

### PRANAYAMA—MASTERING PRANA

*“As wind drives away smoke and impurities from the atmosphere, pranayama is a divine fire which cleanses the organs, senses, mind, intellect and ego.”*

BKS Iyengar, Hatha Yoga master.

Pranayama is the art of breath control, whereby the mental and physical state is brought to a harmonious state of health and serenity. It's a technique that increases, controls, and frees the flow of *prana* throughout the entire body. The practice of pranayama brings awareness to the breath, which then connects us rapidly with our inner physical and emotional state. Midwives, rebirthers, hospice caregivers, and relaxation therapists are among the many healthcare workers who find breath awareness an invaluable technique in helping others.

Our relationship with life is mirrored in our breathing. When we're nervous or excited, our breathing becomes shallow, jerky, and rapid. A relaxed, quiet state will create slow and deep breathing. Rishis of the past noted that animals with rapid rates of respiration, such as mice, who take 1,000 breaths a minute, have a shorter life span than animals with a slow respiration rate, such as tortoises, who breathe four

times a minute and can live up to 300 years. In this way life span was measured in terms of the rate of respiration, slow breathing increasing life span and rapid breathing hastening death.

Humans breathe about 16-18 times a minute inhaling about 13,000 liters of air every 24 hours. Due to exercise, anger, passion, and anxiety, the respiration rate increases, straining the heart and decreasing the life span. The slow, deep breathing and retention of breath in pranayama help compensate for the damage done by rapid, shallow breathing.

Pranayama also ensures a rhythmic harmony between the left bodily channel (*ida*) and the right bodily channel (*pingala*). This is important, as these *nadis* govern opposite polarities in the body.

*Pingala*, which is stimulated by right nostril breathing, promotes heat, masculinity, extroversion, and digestion. Left nostril breathing stimulates *ida*, which encourages cold, femininity, introspection, and fertility. Ordinarily our breathing shifts from one nostril to the other once every hour, whereas pranayama encourages us to use both nostrils in order to maintain a bio-energetic balance.

### TWENTYSEVEN REASONS TO PRACTICE PRANAYAMA

*“Yoga places a close link between prana and the mind: influencing one influences the other. When the breath wanders, the mind is unsteady.”*

-Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

### Physical Benefits

1. Increases lung capacity, giving optimum ventilation to the lungs.
2. Expels stagnant air, carbon dioxide,

and micro-organisms from the respiratory tract.

3. Increases absorption and circulation of fresh oxygen throughout the body.

4. Tones and massages the kidneys, spleen, intestines, adrenal glands, and abdominal muscles.

5. Promotes peristalsis and intestinal circulation, aiding digestion and elimination.

6. Assists treatment of respiratory-tract disorders such as asthma and allergies.

7. Relaxes muscles of the face, neck, chest, and abdomen.

8. Retaining the breath slows the heart rate, resting the heart.

9. Reduces lactic acid build-up, which causes fatigue.

10. Conserves prana.

11. Strengthens the immune system.

12. Promotes longevity.

13. Increases vitality, endurance, and strength.

14. Regulates the body's thermostat, metabolism, and flow of *vata* (air and ether).

15. Strengthens the nervous system.

#### Psychological Benefits

16. Quiets and focuses a chattering or disturbed mind.

17. Heightens faculties of perception, memory, and intellect.

18. Improves ability to concentrate.

19. Creates a sense of serenity and equanimity.

20. Reduces unhealthy desires and addictions, such as excessive eating and drug use.

21. Promotes enthusiasm and cheerfulness.

#### Spiritual Benefits

22. Heightens and focuses inner awareness very rapidly.

23. Cleanses subtle bodily channels (*nadis*).

24. Excellent preparation for concentration (*dharana*) and meditation (*dhyana*).

25. Humming breath facilitates mantra meditation and devotional singing.

26. Reduces negative mental states, giving a sense of the eternal spiritual nature of everything.

27. Encourages one to "live in the present".



Diagram 1(a)  
*Siddhasana*

#### GUIDELINES FOR PRANAYAMA

The best time to practice pranayama is in the morning, when the air is cool and the mind and body are fresh, or at dusk.

- The bowels and bladder should be emptied.
- It is best to practice pranayama after exercises and before meditation.
- Leave at least three hours after eating and 30 minutes after drinking.
- Dress in loose and natural fabrics.
- Find a secluded, quiet, clean, well-ventilated space, preferably free of insects.

- Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or in a chair with the back erect and the head straight. Vajrasana or half-lotus are good positions if comfortable (See diagram 1(a) and (b)).

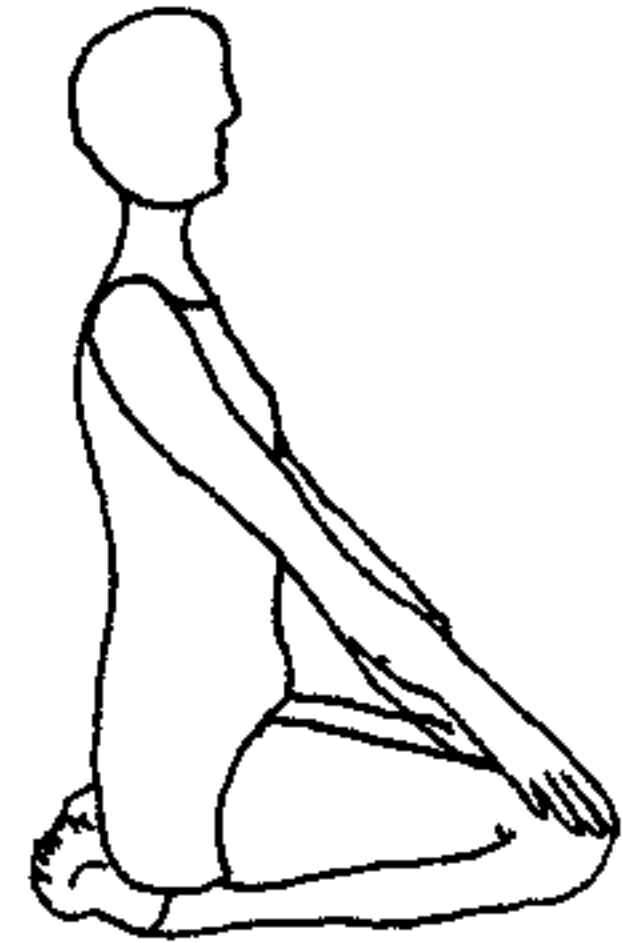


Diagram 1(b)  
*Vajrasana*

- A folded blanket, flat cushion, or mat may be placed on the floor for comfort.
- Keep all your facial and bodily muscles relaxed.
- Close your eyes and, if comfortable, do *shambhavi mudra* (see diagram 2).



Diagram 2 *Shambhavi Mudra*  
Eyes closed, gazing at the eyebrow centre

- Rest the tops of your hands on your knees or in your lap in *jnana mudra* (see diagram 3), unless you are using them.
- Breathe only through the nose unless stated otherwise.

#### PRECAUTIONS WITH PRANAYAMA

Pranayama should be a pleasurable and relaxing experience. If you find it a

strain, you are probably trying too hard or doing it incorrectly.

Be careful not to hold your breath for longer than is comfortable, and stop if you feel heaviness or tightness in the chest. Don't confuse hyperventilation or vertigo with heightened awareness; seek the advice of a yoga teacher if this continues to occur.

Those with low or high blood pressure, a heart condition (especially ischaemic heart disease), emphysema, ulcers, colitis, epilepsy, or vertigo, as well as pregnant women, should practice pranayama only under the supervision of an Ayurvedic physician or a Yoga instructor. Before attempting each pranayama, read the precautions relevant for each practice.

#### PREPARATORY PRACTICES

Few people breathe to their full capacity. Respiration may be limited to the upper clavicular region, mid chest, diaphragm, or abdomen. In order to practice pranayama effectively, one must first learn how to breathe into all these areas by performing a full yogic breath.

#### PREPARATORY PRACTICE 1

##### — THE FULL YOGIC BREATH.

Lie down on your back, placing your right palm flat over your lower abdomen and your left palm at the top of your chest.

Exhale, emptying the air from your abdomen and chest.

Inhale deeply, feeling your abdomen rise as it fills with air, then your chest up to the clavicle should fill with air and rise.

As you exhale, your chest will first lower as the air is expelled, then the abdomen will empty and contract.

The palms help to monitor the wave-like motion of the full yogic breath.

Continue this for five cycles.

Once you have the proper rhythm, proceed to pranayama exercises.

The full yogic breath is to be observed

while doing all pranayamas, unless stated otherwise.

#### PREPARATORY PRACTICE 2

##### — INCREASING LUNG CAPACITY

Sit in a comfortable position, with your back and neck straight (see diagram 3).



Diagram 3  
*Increasing Lung Capacity*

Place both hands behind your shoulders, palms facing outwards and away from each other, with your elbows pointing upward together.

With your chin slightly tucked down and your eyes closed, inhale for the count of four, retain the breath for the count of two, and exhale for the count of four in a full yogic breath.

This is a very effective way to open up the bronchioles of the lungs, expanding the chest cavity and increasing the inward flow of prana. It is an optional exercise that can be done before your practice pranayama.

#### PREPARATORY PRACTICE 3

##### — JALANDHARA BANDHA (CHIN LOCK)

Sitting comfortably after exhalation, drop your chin to fit into the notch between the clavicles. Do not strain the neck muscles; rather, bring the chest up to meet the chin if the stretch is a strain. If necessary, a rolled-up cloth may be placed on the collar bones to reduce the stretch (see diagram 4).



Diagram 4 *Jalandhara Bandha*  
*To be Practiced with select Pranayamas*

Keep the facial muscles and throat relaxed.

Retain the breath in this position for the count of two. Then return to the normal posture and breathing.

This exercise is often practiced in conjunction with pranayama to increase the benefits. This posture compresses the sinus receptors, slowing the heart rate and calming the mind. It also regulates the flow of blood to the head, heart, and endocrine glands, particularly the thyroid and para-thyroid glands in the neck.

Swimming is a perfect exercise to complement the deep, rhythmic breathing required in pranayama. When swimming freestyle, try to start with three strokes breathing on alternate sides; then work up to five strokes in order to practice retaining your breath.

The greatest impediment to pranayama can be obstructed nasal passages. Try the yogic technique of irrigating the nasal passages with warm salted water before practicing.

#### FIVE BASIC PRANAYAMAS

There are hundreds of different styles of pranayama, from the most elementary to the most advanced. The following pranayamas are easy and safe. After trying them, you may choose to do them all daily, or you can select the ones you prefer.

### 1. UJJAYI PRANAYAMA (BABY'S SNORE)

**Method:** Sit in a comfortable position, with a straight back and neck.

Place your hands on your knees in *jnana mudra* (see diagram 5) and close your eyes in Shambhavi mudra



**Diagram 5** *Jnana Mudra*

Can be done if hands are free during Pranayama

(see diagram 2).

Exhale through the nostrils, emptying your lungs and abdomen of air.

Slightly contract the throat (glottis) and breathe in deeply through the nostrils for the count of four. This will make a 'sa' sound similar to the gentle snore of a baby. The abdomen and chest should fill and rise.

Retain breath in *jalandhara bandha* for the count of two; then straighten head and exhale through the mouth to the count of four. A 'ha' sound will be made on exhalation.

Repeat this cycle five times.

**Benefits:** Calms and focuses the mind.

Useful in respiratory-tract disorders, hypertension, insomnia, and fatigue.

Relieves nervous tension and anxiety.

### 2. KAPALABHATI (HEAD-CLEANSING BREATH)

*Kapala* means skull, and *bhati* means to cleanse.

**Method:** Sit in a comfortable position, with the back and neck straight.

Keep the eyes closed in *shambhavi mudra* (see diagram 2), with hands

on knees in *jnana mudra* (see diagram 5).

Release any stagnant air by exhaling through the lungs.

Keeping the chest and head immobile and breathe in deeply through the nostrils, filling the abdomen as it expands outward.

Breathe out forcefully and rapidly through the nostrils as the abdomen contracts and moves in.

The inhalation is passive and the exhalation is vigorous and forceful.

Without pausing, continue to inhale and exhale in this way for 25 breaths.

Then take a deep inhalation and exhalation and relax.

**Precautions:** Those with high or low blood pressure, nose bleeds, glaucoma, or excess heat should practice this pranayama only under the guidance of an Ayurvedic physician or yoga teacher.

**Benefits:** Cleanses the respiratory tract, particularly purifying the throat and lungs, and increases the oxygen supply to the brain.

Removes accumulated mucus in the nose and throat.

Raises the body temperature and increases metabolism and digestive fire.

Relaxes and revitalizes the body and mind.

### 3. NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA (ALTERNATE NOSTRIL-BREATHING)

As mentioned above, nadis are the subtle energy channels in the body, and shodhana means purification. Hence this pranayama helps purify the body's energy channels (see diagram 6).



**Diagram 6**

*Nadi Shodhana Pranayama*  
Alternate nostril breathing

**Method:** Sit in a comfortable posture, with the spine and head straight.

Rest the left hand on the left knee or in the lap in *jnana mudra* (see diagram 5).

Place the index and middle finger of your right hand at the center of the eyebrows to rest there until the practice is complete.

You should be able to block the right nostril with the thumb and the left nostril with the third finger of the right hand.

Keep the left nostril open and close the right nostril with the thumb.

Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril to the count of four. Block both nostrils and hold the breath for the count of two.

Block the left nostril and unblock the right nostril; exhale to the count of four.

Keeping the left nostril blocked, inhale through the right nostril to the count of four.

Block both nostrils and retain the breath for two counts.



Unblock the left nostril and exhale to the count of four.

Now you have completed one cycle.

Continue for at least two minutes at first, daily increasing the duration up to ten minutes.

**Benefits:** Equalizes the flow of *ida* (left channel) and *pingala* (right channel), thereby balancing the body's metabolic processes.

Promotes mental clarity, focus, and serenity.

Releases carbon dioxide and nourishes the body with fresh oxygen.

Improves general stamina, concentration, and mental disposition.

Especially useful in people with psychological imbalances, endocrine disorders, anxiety, stress, insomnia, diabetes, constipation, asthma, and chronic fatigue syndrome.

#### 4. SHEETALI PRANAYAMA (COOLING BREATH)

*Sheet* means cooling, which is just what this breathing exercise accomplishes (see diagram 7).



**Diagram 7** *Sheetali Pranayama*  
Cooling breath

**Method:** Sit in a comfortable position with the back and head erect, hands on the knees in *jnana mudra* (see diagram 3), and eyes closed.

Make a puckered circle with your

mouth; then stick out your tongue and curl the edges inward to form a tube.

Inhale slowly and deeply through the tube to the count of four, as if sucking air through a straw.

Fill up your abdomen and chest to full capacity.

Retain the breath and perform *jalandhara bandha* (see diagram 5) for the count of four.

Exhale through the nostrils until all air is expelled.

This is one cycle. Repeat up to 10 times, or as many as you feel comfortable doing.

**Benefits:** The breath, moistened and cooled after passing through the wet tongue, cools and rehydrates the body.

Eliminates thirst and refreshes the mouth.

Helps one control thirst, hunger, and sleep.

Reduces excess heat and is thus useful in fever, sunstroke, and eye disorders.

Improves the function of the liver, spleen, and digestive system and purifies the blood.

Encourages the flow of prana.

Induces mental and physical calm and relaxation.

Particularly useful in halitosis, high blood pressure, mental tension, and heated conditions.

#### 5. BHARAMARI PRANAYAMA (THE BEE BREATH)

*Bhramari* is a bumble-bee, which makes the buzzing sound that is created in this pranayama (see diagram 8).



**Diagram 8**  
*Bhramari Pranayama*

**Method:** Sit in a comfortable position with the head and spine straight.

Close your eyes, place four fingers over each eye, and with your thumbs block your ears.

Inhale deeply and gently through both nostrils, practicing the full yogic inhalation.

With the mouth closed, exhale smoothly through the nostrils and produce a gentle, continuous humming sound until the exhalation has exhausted.

Practice this for five cycles.

**Benefits:** This is an excellent exercise before mantra meditation or singing, as it heightens awareness of subtle sound vibrations; especially good for singers.

Relieves insomnia, anxiety, anger, and depression.

Helps one attain inner awareness very rapidly.

Especially useful for women preparing for labor.

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# News from Around the World

## CHEERS!—GRAPE JUICE PROVIDES HEALTH BENEFITS WITHOUT ALCOHOL

(CNN) Many have heard of the so-called "French paradox," where residents of France are less likely to die of cardiovascular disease than Americans, despite eating more saturated fat and having higher cholesterol levels and blood pressure. Tests suggest that the daily consumption of red wine contributes to the health of the French.

But if you'd rather not consume a full glass of wine every day just to get its non-alcoholic benefits, fear not: the same benefits and more can be found in a tall glass of grape juice. The purple kind is best, containing the same antioxidants, called flavonoids, that are found in red wine.

A 1999 study of 15 patients with cardiovascular disease showed that grape juice flavonoids helped prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, which is the process that leads to the formation of plaque in artery walls.

Researchers from the University of Wisconsin Medical School had patients drink a large glass of grape juice daily. After two weeks, LDL oxidation levels were significantly reduced, and ultrasound images indicated that the patients' blood was flowing more freely.

Other studies have found that grape juice lowered the risk of forming blood clots. Red wine does this too, but the amount required would make you legally drunk. Unlike grape juice, alcohol releases free radicals into the body, which can lead to damage of the blood vessel tissues. Grape juice actually improves the functioning of the cells that line blood vessels.

Here's the full story from WebMD: <http://www.alt-health.com/cgi/frame.set.cgi?url=http://www.cnn.com/2000/HEALTH/alternative/03/31/wine.heart.wmd/index.html&named=CNN.com&hosturl=http://www.cnn>.

## SOMETHING TO PONDER . . .

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep ... you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace ... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness ... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death ... you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married ...you are very rare, even in the United States....

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

## UP TO FIVE CIGARETTES A DAY—FREE!

Ten brave healthy nonsmokers who had agreed to avoid exposure to tobacco smoke for several weeks before the trial underwent a five-hour trip in one of the smoking compartments of a French train. When their urine was analyzed immediately afterwards, it showed levels of cotinine (a derivative of nicotine) similar to those in a person who smokes two to five cigarettes a day.

(Roussel, G. et al. "Passive Smoking in Train Coaches." *Presse Medicate*, 1994; 23:1559-1564)

## ZINC CAN CUT INFANT DEATH RATE

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Giving zinc supplements to small and premature babies could cut their death rate by as much as one third, researchers said recently. The zinc may boost the tiny babies immune system, helping them fight off disease, researchers said.

Dr. Robert Black and Sunil Sazawal from John Hopkins University in Maryland, and colleagues at Annamalai University in India, did tests on 1,250 low-birthweight Indian children, who got zinc supplements, zinc with other vitamins and minerals and minerals without zinc, vitamins alone or a dummy pill. The babies who got zinc, either alone or with other nutrients, were one third less likely to die, researchers reported to a meeting of the Federation of American Scientists Experimental Biology in Washington.

## PESTICIDE EXPOSURE UNAVOIDABLE

The Society for the Promotion of Nutritional Therapy states that it is now impossible to avoid exposure to agricultural pesticides, even for those living in urban areas. Spray drift (invisible clouds of small droplets) is carried on the wind from as far away as Africa and is breathed in by everyone. Pesticides are sprayed on parks, school playing fields, footpaths, roadsides, and pavements, and also in buildings. They are also used in domestic weed killers and wood preservatives. They seep into the water table and from there into our drinking water.

A 1983 survey revealed that just over one third of fruit, vegetables, bran, sausages, burgers, and cheese contained detectable residues.

(*Nutritional Therapy Today*, 1994; 4:3,1)

# News from Around the World

## HEART ATTACKS NOT ALWAYS PRECEDED BY CHEST PAIN

June 28, 2000 (Ivanhoe Newswire) — Chest pain may not always be the best indicator of a heart attack, says a new study. Approximately one-third of the patients diagnosed with heart attacks between June 1994 and March 1998 did not first experience chest pain, according to a surprising new study released by the American Medical Association.

The study, which looked at 400,000 patients, also found that there are six factors associated with an absence of chest pain: prior heart failure, prior stroke, older age, diabetes, being female or part of a minority group.

"Our initiatives," said lead author John Canto, M.D., of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, "need to emphasize that the presence of chest pain is not necessarily the 'golden rule' of heart attacks. And we need to educate both the public and medical providers on the other features and symptoms to facilitate more accurate and expedient diagnoses for these patients who aren't suffering from chest pain."

The investigators say they are worried because patients who don't experience pain might put off seeking treatment. Furthermore, some physicians may not diagnose these patients accurately. Patients who had heart attacks without preliminary chest pain were twice as likely to die in the hospital, and therefore researchers say awareness and education are key.

Other symptoms include: uncomfortable pressure, fullness or squeezing in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes; chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath; anxiety, nervousness and/or cold, sweaty skin; paleness or pallor; increased or irregular heart rate, and a feeling of impending doom.

To receive a free weekly e-mail on Medical Breakthroughs, go to <[www.ivanhoe.com/docs/survey.html](http://www.ivanhoe.com/docs/survey.html)>

## MICROWAVED TO MUTATE

Recent research shows that cooking or heating food in microwave ovens can cause severe molecular damage in the food, which, when eaten, leads to abnormal changes in human blood. These changes can cause deterioration of the immune system.

In 1991 Young Families, an extension service of the University of Minnesota, warned against heating babies' milk bottles in microwaves for both practical safety and nutritional reasons. "Heating the bottle in a microwave can cause slight changes in the milk. In infant formulas there may be a loss of some vitamins. In expressed breast milk some protective properties may be destroyed."

Blood for transfusions is routinely warmed, but, according to a 1991 lawsuit in the US, when a nurse warmed a sample in a microwave oven (not normal practice) it killed the patient.

(Tom Valentine. "The Hidden Hazards of Microwave Cooking"  
*Nexus* 1995;2:25, 25-29)

## CANCER IN THE HOME

Children living in households using hanging insecticidal strips are at almost twice the risk of developing leukemia. This rises to three times the risk if the strips were used in the last three months of their mothers' pregnancy. Dichlorvos, the main insecticide used in hanging strips, is classified by the US Environmental Protection Agency as a carcinogen.

Researchers from the North Carolina State Center for Health and Environmental Statistics have also found that children living in households with gardens treated with chemicals are almost four times as likely to contract cancer of the soft tissue. A separate study showed that dogs were twice as likely to develop cancers if their owners treated their lawns with 2,4-D, the main weed killer used in gardens. Several

studies have linked this herbicide to cancer in farm workers.

(Independent on Sunday 20.3.95)

## MMR AND DPT VACCINES INCREASE SEIZURES

Research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, USA, into adverse reactions to vaccinations against MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus) has identified thirty-four major side effects, including asthma, blood disorders, infectious diseases, diabetes, and such neurological disorders as polio, meningitis, and hearing loss.

The most significant finding was the increase in the rate of seizures, which rose to three times above the national norm within the first day after a child received either a DPT or MMR jab. Reactions to the DPT jab were immediate, while the worst reactions to the MMR jab came between eight days and two weeks after the jab.

(Major seizure link to jabs: *What Doctors Don't Tell You* 1994; 5:8, 4)

## THE "PILL" TIME BOMB

During the first six months of taking the Pill, a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer triples. After that period the risk reduces to double the normal risk but rises again to triple if the Pill is taken for more than twelve years. The research producing these conclusions, led by Dr. G. Ursin of the University of Southern California, has added to scientists' increasing concern that the Pill may be a time bomb.

The rate of cervical cancer in the US doubled between the early 70s and the mid-80s. Since its introduction in the 60s the Pill has also been linked to breast cancer and thrombosis.

("Cancer Risk Doubles with Pill"  
*What Doctors Don't Tell You*  
1995;5:10,4)