

MYSTIC MUSINGS: Monthly Ayurvedic Wisdom from the Mystic Masala
SEPTEMBER 2008

This month's musings:

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**Fragrant September Greetings,

Glynnis Osher Welcome to our Early Fall issue of Mystic Musings, a guide to living in balance every day with the simplicity of Ayurveda. The slight chill in the air and early changing of leaves, brings to our attention the Vata time of year. A season of cool dry air, lots of activity and movement in the cosmos as well as within ourselves. A time to keep our internal balance as we take on new challenges and busy schedules.

Traditionally in Ayurvedic practices this is one of the junctions of the seasons where we ready ourselves for purification and rejuvenation therapies. We will talk about practices such as Pancha Karma and healing foods in our 'Ayurvedic Apothecary'. In 'Diapers to Doshas', Spice Ambassador Julia ponders her daughters doshas and in 'Mind over Mantra' we look into the meaning of the auspicious number 108! Your EDEN offers another nourishing practice; self massage or abhyanga, as we continue to develop home practices for balance and well-being, creating good habits for life. Friend, Yoga teacher, Ayurvedic colleague and co-founder of Indigo Yoga and Holistic Healing, Madhuri, shares her insights on Yoga and Ayurveda, with suggestions for asanas (postures) to balance yours!

We address the question of copper in this month's 'Mystic MaShala' and invite you to submit your own questions or thoughts in the next issue to this open forum on Ayurvedic wisdom.

Awaken to the wisdom of these Ayurvedic practices and enjoy!

Namaste and fragrant blessings,
Spice Mistress Glynnis

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**Ayurvedic Apothecary
by the Spice Mistress

Aaaaah, Summer is winding down and Fall is almost here. The Vata dosha is getting ready to take extra care in finding and maintaining balance. It is this time of year that can be most aggravating to the mutable air constitution which in turn can disrupt the balance of the others.

Kichadi! (also called kichari) is a simple and quick to make one pot meal with a bunch of benefits. Kichadi is the core of Ayurvedic nutritional healing and cleansing. A balancing, grounding dish of split mung beans and basmati rice with the right spices and herbs, Kichadi not only nourishes Vata but is also the preparatory diet for Pancha Karma (the five actions-of cleansing). The transition of the seasons is the ideal time for these Ayurvedic cleansing therapies which help to reset the body clock, rebalance the doshas and remove Ama from the system. Ama is an accumulation of toxins which can form in the body from poor diet, undigested foods, stress, lack of appropriate exercise and a generally unhealthy lifestyle. Pancha Karma is best practiced under the care and guidance of an Ayurvedic practitioner and involves many facets, however Kichadi is a food easily made at home and very nurturing to Vata for any meal specially during this season.

Kichadis take on endless variations depending on the herbs, spices and vegetables used in them. They are very sattvic (balancing to the body, harmonious to mind and soul) and easy to digest. My personal favourite Kichadi recipe is a deliciously simple version. I really never get tired of eating kichadi!

TRIDOSHIC KICHADI

- 4 tablespoons ghee
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- Half a medium onion finely diced

1 inch fresh peeled ginger, finely diced
1/4 teaspoon hing (asafoetida) (this reduces the gaseous nature of beans during cooking)
1 cup split mung dal
3/4 cup white basmati rice
1/2 bunch spinach (alternate with 1-2 cups of other greens or veggies such as diced butternut or squashes for a sweeter kichadi)
1 1/2 teaspoon sea salt/rock salt
4 1/2 cups water (may add more water for a more watery soup kichadi or less for a drier stew)
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon turmeric

In a heavy-bottomed pan, heat the ghee on medium and add the onions and ginger to saute until tender. Add the whole cumin and coriander seeds, saute for 2 or so more minutes. Add the hing and stir in. Wash the dal and rice until the rinse water is clear, drain well and add to the mixture. Saute for a few more minutes and add the cold water, cover and bring to a boil. Once boiling, stir, lower heat and simmer until tender with the lid on, about 20 minutes. While the kichadi is cooking wash and chop the spinach/greens. Add the greens to the top of the mixture and replace the cover. Allow to 'steam' on top for 5 minutes. Stir in and add salt and mix in. Add in the powdered cumin and turmeric and stir in. (If you are using veggies that take longer to cook than greens (like squash), add to mixture 10 minutes before done).

Garnish with a squeeze of lime, fresh cilantro or parsley, a small dollop more of ghee, toasted sesame seeds (or your Gomasala from last month's Mystic Musings). YUM, so satisfying. Enjoy!

For the benefits of the seeds and herbs:
[http://www.themysticmasala.com/musings/spicewisdom_0908.html]

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****Yoga and Ayurveda**
by Madhuri

It seems that Yoga has become a household term and people of all ages, religions and demographics are enjoying the benefits of this ancient art form. Subsequently, the forgotten marriage between the two ancient Vedic sciences of Yoga and Ayurveda are now being reunited through awareness and the desire to find balance and stillness within the 'busy-ness' of our lives.

These two beautiful wisdoms, Yoga & Ayurveda cannot be separated. The farther we travel along the path of Yoga asanas (postures) we inevitably stumble upon the gem of Ayurveda. Ayurveda being the 'Science of Life' enhances not only our yoga practice but also informs the approach we take in yoga and in our life (these are one and the same).

Once we have an understanding of the 3 doshas or constitutions in Ayurveda and how the 5 elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether exist in all matter, including the individual we begin to notice the physical, psychological and sensory impressions being influenced by these elements. The 5 elements combine into three basic energies, vata (air and ether), pitta (fire and a little water) and kapha (earth and water) and determine how the individual finds balance, or goes out of balance. Our yoga practice can be one that brings us great peace, relaxation and joy or if we are choosing the incorrect practices for our constitution, the season, the stage of life that we are in, the time of day or the climate, we may be taking our selves further away from the balance in which we seek.

Learning, understanding and (the key), applying the principles of Ayurveda into our yoga practice and our life may look like the opposite of what our habitual patterns are. For those who are always pushing and competing (Pitta), a gentle cooling and relaxing class will bring balance. Postures such as the bow pose, cobra, boat and fish pose all release tension from the solar plexus, small intestine and liver where pitta accumulates. For those who are on the lethargic side (Kapha) a more dynamic practice will be most effective in returning to perfect health. Postures such as virabhadrasana I & II (warrior posture), backbends and dynamic sun salutations to invigorate and energize are best. For anxious or overly stressed individuals (Vata) a grounding, centering and relaxing practice will be useful. Postures to emphasize are seated asanas such as lotus pose, forward bends, balances and a deliciously long relaxation practice to sooth any nervous energy.

As we enter onto our yoga mat let us consider our Ayurvedic constitution, how we are feeling in the moment and what postures will enhance the qualities in which we aim to enrich and not distract us from our journey of well-being.

To contact Madhuri, please visit her online at:
[<http://www.indigoyogahealing.com>].

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****Your EDEN**

What is EDEN? Quite simply I believe we can create harmony on a daily basis with very little, but consistent effort, with Every Day Essential Nurturing. Taking on one small practice a month makes things manageable, and over time accumulate benefits, positively affecting your entire state of health.

This month, being the time of Vata disturbance, we need to look at balancing the air and ether elements regardless of our Ayurvedic constitution. The weather is drying, cool and changeable and to bring nourishment and calm to the whole system we incorporate 'abhyanga' or self-massage to our daily routine.

Self-massage nourishes and softens the skin, promotes circulation, lubricates the joints, calms the nerves, tones the muscles, gives mental clarity, and brings a sense of confidence vibrant health and well-being. Abhyanga is a rhythmic Ayurvedic massage using long firm strokes, which deeply nourishes the entire body.

The Ayurvedic massage is traditionally performed in the morning before your shower or bath. Sesame oil is the ideal choice for Vata, and also for the other doshas in the Vata season. It is the classic base oil used in abhyanga. (you do not want to use the toasted variety! Cold pressed organic sesame oil is best if available). As an alternate, for Pitta in the Summer, you may prefer sunflower or coconut oil and for Kapha in the Spring, you may use mustard or almond oil.

Prepare to nourish yourself:

1. Warm your oil in advance by placing the bottle in a cup or basin of hot water.
2. Place an old towel on the floor to catch dripping oil and to prevent slipping.
3. Start by pouring oil into the palm of your hand and begin with the head. (this will benefit the scalp and the oil can be washed out with a mild shampoo). Apply oil to the crown of the head and work the oil into scalp with a circular 'shampoo and friction' movement using your fingertips.
4. From the head, move in long strokes, applying oil to the body in the direction towards the feet. You can alternate by working down one side of the body and then up the same side and then working down the other side and back up.
5. Vary the style and pressure of your stroke. The main goal is touch, as a loving touch brings peace to the mind and detoxifies the tissues of the body in a subtle and enduring way. Oil your skin with awareness using a pressure and style that feels comfortable to you.
6. A general guide is to use long up and down strokes over limbs, and circular strokes over the joints, chest and abdomen.
7. 10 minutes is all you will need and you are done. It is ideal to leave oil on skin for 10-15 minutes. Wipe excess oil off the soles of your feet and step into the bath or shower on a non-slip mat. Allow the warm water to 'steam' your body and transport the oils deeper into your tissues. Use a gentle natural soap without any harsh detergents or chemicals. A slight residue of oil left on the skin is healthy and will nourish your skin, keeping it soft and moisturized, especially in the dry Fall months.

Our daily routine of EDEN expands as we develop and embrace healthful lifelong practices.

- 1 Tongue scraping
- 2 Drink warm water first thing
- 3 Your breathing practice
- 4 Self-abhyanga and shower/bath.

Check out our Mystic Musings Archives to review previous EDEN practices: [http://www.themysticmasala.com/musings_archive.html]

That's it! Om, Peace.

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****Mind Over Mantra – 108!!**

Last month we mentioned that chanting a mantra 108 times is an auspicious practice. This week we will briefly look at why.

The number 108 has been considered sacred for thousands of years in India. The origin of this number seems to have its roots in astronomy and astrology. This number has had spiritual relevance in Hinduism, Buddhism and in yogic and tantric practices. Most prayer (mala) beads for chanting and counting mantras have 108 beads plus one additional head bead for marking the beginning and end.

In Vedic astrology there are 12 constellations, and 9 arc segments called namshas or chandrakalas. 9 times 12 equals 108. Chandra is moon, and kalas are the divisions within a whole.

There are 54 letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. Each contains the masculine and the feminine, Shiva and Shakti. 54 times 2 is 108, representing both cosmic energies.

On the Sri Yantra, there are marmas (energy points or nerve connections), where three lines intersect, and there are 54 such intersections. Each intersection has again Shiva and Shakti qualities. 54 x 2 is 108. Thus, there are 108 points that define the Sri Yantra as well as the human body which reflects these marmas.

In the symbolic numerology of 108, the number 1 symbolizes the Divine or higher Truth, 0 symbolizes emptiness or realization in spiritual practice, and 8 symbolizes infinity or eternity.

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**Autumn is Vata Time!

Warming aromatherapy scents of cardamon, mandarin and basil lift the mood and warm the soul, and bring sweetness and stability to the Vata mind.

The Mystic Masala's pure soy Vata candle is perfect for those cool dusky evenings and morning meditations.

For a dry, cool skin, the Handcrafted all natural herbal Vata soap is rich with sesame oil, warming for a Vata-type skin with essential oils of vetiver, lime and orange add an earthy pleasure to bathing time.

The Mystic Masala works with a women's fair trade cooperative in Nepal creating conscious body care products for you, and providing a fair wage, education, and benefits for the cooperative, and supporting a growing community of women-owned business globally. Herbs are sustainably harvested and products are crafted honoring traditional Ayurvedic processes.

A healthy body, a healthy spirit and a healthy planet.

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**From Diapers to Doshas

by Julia Doherty
– Spice Ambassador and Supermom

Hey mom, which one am I?

One of the best indicators of our children's doshas is how they interact and socialize with their peers. We've all seen the little one on the playground who just isn't interested in doing what everybody else is, another who prefers smaller groups to play with and others who can run with the big pack.

How children play shows us how they like their information to be fed to them and how they like to pass on their information – as usual let's check out my two girls.

My eldest, all of six years old, will walk onto a playground, approach a youngster she doesn't know and say "hello, what's your name, do you want to play ponies?" – she absolutely loves being with people, she is sociable and friendly, loves to laugh and gets "bored to death" (yes, a quote!) if we spend too much time in the house. She works well with groups (there's your team sports), her energy is free and joyful (she runs with abandon) and loves school (thank goodness for September!).

This young social butterfly, with her group cooperation and free spirit, portrays a lot of Vata characteristics, with a good measure of Pitta confidence and Kapha nurturing.

My youngest, the four year old, is completely different, she prefers to hang back and determine who she wants to play with - she likes the big girls on the playground who follow her around like groupies! She runs with a single-minded, arm-pumping purpose (to get there fast!), she is methodical when she builds and has a very strong sense of how she wants the end result,

she loves staying at home.

This time the methodical, focused and preference to play alone is a strong Pitta indication with a measured Kapha sensibility

Children are a blank canvas who reflect so much of their inner workings when they play – childhood is a Kapha time of life with no time constraints, no jobs to do, just play and eat! The pressures of adulthood can strain our doshas into imbalance so that sometimes it does pay to play like a child!

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**Thousand Petal Lotus Indian Head Massage

Our Spice Mistress, Glynnis, is very excited to announce, Thousand Petal Lotus Indian Head Massage.

The health benefits of Indian Head Massage are numerous:

- relieve hair and scalp problems
- bring circulation to the scalp
- relaxation of the nervous system
- reduction of stress, depression, anxiety and insomnia
- relieves deep-seated emotional and physical tension

(Look out for our article on shirobhyanga in next month's Mystic Musings)

Glynnis, a shirobhyanga practitioner, is very excited to be able to share this ancient art of wellness and relaxation with you.

For information, please contact Glynnis at:
glynnis@thousandpetalotus.com or 604 254 0494.

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**Mystic MaShala

We invite you to submit your Ayurvedic question or insights and join our community of Ayurvedic Wisdom. We will feature as many as possible each month.

Please submit to: [<mailto:musings@themysticmasala.com?subject=MaShala%20submission>]

This month's question:

Q. I heard that copper deficiency will make gray hair. Where can I find this copper besides pills?
– Krystyna

A. Thank you for your question, Krystyna.

Copper is present in a lot of the foods that we eat and we only need a small amount to satisfy the body's need for sufficient levels. Copper supplements are usually not necessary and may even be harmful. Food sources of copper include most whole grains, legumes, oysters, dark chocolate, fruits such as cherries and papaya, leafy green vegetables, molasses, nuts, poultry, prunes, soybeans, tofu, shellfish to name a few.

Copper cups Ayurvedic experts recommend filling a Copper cup with pure water each night and drinking the water early the next morning. The water will have absorbed copper, this essential mineral that balances acidity and helps digestion and assimilation. The body primarily digests copper in the stomach and upper intestine. If you have absorption issues, which may be a result of ama or toxin build up in the body, there may be other minerals as well as copper which are not being properly absorbed. It is wise to have your copper, iron, calcium and zinc levels checked as they all work together to affect proper absorption.

Because the pigment melanin needs copper for it's proper functioning, copper deficiency can possibly cause early graying of the hair as well as loss of skin color. Graying hair is a classic Pitta characteristic and you may need to consider a Pitta pacifying diet and lifestyle if you are displaying other Pitta-related imbalances, such as excess heat, irritation, acidity and mental stress . An Ayurvedic practitioner can guide you with an accurate diagnosis of your personal health, as well you can observe your own constitution and adjust your lifestyle practices seasonally to bring balance and to be your own true healer.

Om Shanti.

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Ayurvedic Meet-up Group
Join the Vancouver Ayurveda Meet-up group.

The Ayurveda meet up group is an informal platform for Ayurvedic learning and sharing of ideas in the local Vancouver community. Our vision is to expand awareness in the Ayurvedic arena so we can use the tools of Ayurveda on a daily basis to enrich our well-being and experience balance in our lives.

We host international teachers as well as local experts in a fun and stimulating environment of learning to bring this ancient tradition into our contemporary lives.

Meet up here: [<http://ayurveda.meetup.com/113>]

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Upcoming Ayurveda Events

AYURVEDIC COOKING WORKSHOP

with Spice Mistress Glynnis
September 20, 2008
2 to 7 pm
Ayurveda, 3630 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.

Learn about the foods for the doshas, engage in an exciting hands-on cooking experience and enjoy the fruits of the class with a delightful and nourishing dinner to wrap up. Includes all ingredients.

More details on the Ayurveda meet-up calendar at: [<http://ayurveda.meetup.com/113>].
Call 604 254 0494 to reserve a space or to find out more details.

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INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDA WORKSHOP

with Madhuri & Glynnis
'The Muddy Lotus-Ayurveda
Wisdom Workshops'
Sunday October 19th
2 to 5 pm
Cost: \$60

Ayurveda is the ancient medical system of India, including the healing of body, mind and spirit. It is the science of life itself. In this workshop you will gain an understanding of Ayurvedic principles such as your "Prakruti", your Ayurvedic constitutional nature and your "Vikruti" or current state of health. We will explore the history, philosophy and practical aspects of Ayurveda together with an analysis of how Ayurveda can help you individualize health care practices such as diet, nutrition, yoga and lifestyle choices. Come and learn about this amazing system for healing that is relevant and essential to our modern day living.

Call Madhuri at 604 215 0037 for more information or to register.

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A devotional poem by the
mystic, Lal Diddi
translated by Coleman Barks

The soul, like the moon
is new, and always new again.

And I have seen the ocean
continuously creating.

Since I scoured my mind
and my body, I too Lalla,
am new, each moment new.

My teacher told me one thing,
Live in the soul.

When that was so,
I began to go naked,
and dance.

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The Mystic Masala - Vancouver, BC Canada
In Vancouver: (604) 876-3994 • Within North America: (917) 239-5594

Thank-you for signing up for Mystic Musings at The Mystic Masala website or at one of our show booths!

E-mail: info@themysticmasala.com • Visit www.themysticmasala.com

If you have any comments or suggestions for Mystic Musings, please e-mail: musings@themysticmasala.com

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