

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 1, 2018

Preparations have been going on since last evening for the Full Moon fire ceremony celebration and coincidentally, welcome the new year. Several significant bodies within our solar system are conjunct this New Year's Day of 2018, while the sun remains now in late Sagittarius.

A blue moon is the second of two full moons appearing in a single month. On average every 2nd year, a blue moon occurs, but this year 2 blue moons will occur in each of Jan. and Feb. Let's see what God has in store! The SwamiGuru here has commented that 'God brings only good things.' Such a great reminder about our mind's tendency to classify experience into 'good' and 'bad'.

The early morning temperature is cool, rather a funny concept for us Canadians! A shawl is needed – ha, ha!

January 3, 2018

Each afternoon we have the option of attending 'satsang', a question and answer session of about 75 minutes, for patients to enquire about any aspect of treatment or even life itself. Various presenters are invited to share their expertise.

Yesterday, Daniela Wolff (cook@danielawolff.com) from Austria, talked about her upcoming book on nutrition according to Ayurveda written in German, based on her extensive study of the Ayurveda scriptures on the subject, as well as her vast knowledge of the up-to-date research on the topic. For a summary of Daniela's outline on yesterday's talk, compiled by one of our group members, please click [here](#) for a glimpse of Circadian Rhythms.

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January 4, 2018

Vaidyagrama has been overbooked during these holy days, and now the numbers are settling down, with many patients leaving, and fewer new ones arriving. We meet others from different parts of India, Norway, Alaska, Texas, England, Hong Kong, Dubai, Germany, Boston, Austria, Mauritius, Ireland, Brazil and many other places, and they meet Canadians from northern Manitoba, Nelson, Costa Rica, Alberta, Ontario, Surrey, Quebec, Parksville, etc.

Although maintaining silence and rest are deemed best practices for taking full advantage of this very sophisticated science of detoxification, we're indeed tempted to meet and greet one another and share our healing journey stories. So many have reported their experiences in other panchakarma centres, and have decided to make Vaidyagrama their centre of choice.

Both the hospital policies and the individualized physician instructions discourage yoga exercise, whereas visitors to another centre report having 'two vigorous yoga classes a day'. The program here, however, is to support understanding of balanced health

routines, and seeks to bring awareness of our lifestyle tendencies towards unhealthy extremes. Rest is often underrated in the west, but here at Vaidyagrama, is venerated as a critical restorative measure.

Taking up a balanced exercise program of morning stretching on returning home is suggested. Often in the west yoga classes are scheduled in the afternoons or evenings, but here the normalization of diurnal cycles is supported. Rest is emphasized during the treatment phase of cleansing and purifications, but gradually, exercise can be resumed at a safe and appropriate pace.

Sleep disturbance is one of the most prevalent concerns of patients, both here at Vaidyagrama and at home. Patients wean off their sleeping pills, pot smoking or television addiction patterns, and experience natural diurnal bio-rhythms, often for the first time in years. The commitment to remain faithful to the Ayurveda daily routine follows from understanding and experiencing early waking and early sleep.

January 7, 2018

People sign up for various lengths of stay, from a week or ten days, to our group's 41 days of treatment and at least 6 days of rest, 3 before and 3 after treatment. Ayurveda science has understood the role of the time in healing. For instance, each of the 7 dhatus requires an average of 5 days each for its local metabolic cycle, meaning that only an odd number of treatment days is optimal. Western science has not come to this understanding as yet.

Thirty-five days of treatment allows for minimum cleansing of the channel systems according to Ayurveda. Shorter programs are however common, due to the concept that "I don't have enough time". If you are considering your own healing program, please take into account nature's own time cycle for purifications, detoxifications and re-building phases.

Dr. Ramkumar has commented that if health is our priority, we have plenty of time and money for it, but if health is not our priority, we have limited time and funds available. If the dosha is only in the plasma or blood or even muscle tissue, shorter programs can be beneficial. If, however, the dosha is lingering in the adipose, bone, nervous systems, marrow or endocrine systems, then sufficient time is advised to effect a turnaround of long-standing 'dis-ease'.

January 8, 2018

Our group is now nearing the end of this precious treatment phase. Most are winding down by this coming Saturday, in only a very few days. It's recommended to schedule equal or double the number of treatment days for rest and integration of the benefits, depending on the extent of the disease. As the dhatu (tissue) metabolism process continues, rest and maintenance of the daily routine is required to continue to increase metabolic efficiency and integrate all potential benefits.

Recently, I saw a FB post of a patient who came for a short cleansing stay here and later pictured ice-cream and delicious food shots online, during her integration period from her home. Unfortunate how the mind led us into disease and imbalance initially, and can also prevent imbibing the benefits of the investment by attachment to deleterious habits and beliefs.

Resuming the prior lifestyle choices that first caused our malaise, according to the law of cause and effect, is still the great danger in front of us now. Our support of one another here is helping to take full advantage of our opportunity when returning 'home'. When we prepare to leave and step away from the incredible faculty and staff support in this idyllic garden, we are about to rely on our own mind's knowing for maintaining the wondrous benefits accrued here.

The aura is now much opened, toxicity levels much reduced and confidence high. Each crossroad of life is said to be inherently 'dangerous', therefore more caution is suggested. Coming back to the middle path of daily living is soon to become our challenge. Our healthy daily routines, especially the morning self-care practices, are now so much better understood, and it will be up to us individually to maintain and improve these.

We're learning so much about the importance of robust digestion, eating according to Ayurveda principles, and guiding the lifestyle towards stress-free relationships. Yes, the words subtle, profound, ease, awareness, understanding, forgiveness, consistency, have taken on so much more meaning now to each of us. In our group, we've talked a lot about 'voice', and how we express ourselves and our natures. Our self-statements have become doorways to self-understanding and self-empowerment.

January 9, 2018

Today is my second to last day of pizhichil treatments, pouring of warm, medicated oil throughout the body, a full body massage for deep action into the neuro-muscular system, inducing gentle sweating. My program this time began with 3 weeks or so of cleansing of channel systems by pouring warm herbal decoction throughout the body, including freshly harvested and processed herbs from this garden.

Then came the cleansing therapies of 'basti' and 'virechan', carefully measured, monitored and supervised by my medical team of four to five rotating doctors and as many therapists. Such a level of care when one feels so vulnerable is indeed heavenly to me. During the cleansing phase, fatigue is not uncommon because the body is working hard to metabolize changes. Now vigour is returning, energy is enthusiastic and lighter.

January 10, 2018

Early this morning, the soft rain began falling ever so gently over this idyllic garden retreat, as if her gentle cleansing was spreading a blessing on all beings below her on the earth. Her sweet drops reminded me how life is so dependent on clean waters.

Sleep cycles receive a great emphasis here, as many patients come with sleep disturbances, all the way from simple irregular sleep to eventual "Bi-Polar" disease. Finding one's way back from sleeplessness or even irregular sleep has become a great challenge in our modern, western world.

Many neurological and neuro-muscular diseases are also associated with long-standing unhealthy sleep patterns. How did we acquire such disturbances, when as babies, we slept perhaps 20 hrs. a day? What is it about our daily life that induces exhaustion in

place of calm? Why is Ayurveda so very effective in supporting re-establishment of the circadian rhythms?

While some may say that infants are now born with more sleep disturbances, I do wonder why and how we mothers agree to live such stressed lives? A simple lack of awareness, a compulsion towards 'achievement', misunderstandings of livelihood? How to best address this lack of knowledge of Ayurveda principles of balance in our culture?

January 11, 2018

Discussions here also focus a great deal on appetite, food choices, digestion and elimination, as the foundation of health. Ayurveda jokes are often fashioned around these cardinal features of healthy living. Delicious foods can encourage us to overeat.

Food served in this hospital setting is 'easy to digest' (read unappetizing). Not always, but much of the time. The purpose is to enkindle 'agni' or appetite, to help it become robust again, in its link with the channel systems of Ayurveda physiology. Disease occurs when the channel systems become clogged with undigested material, called 'ama', which then can become morbid and begin to impede once youthful assimilation of nutrients, leading to a variety of disease states, depending on our unique metabolism.

After all, the medical scriptures of Ayurveda are from time immemorial dedicated to 'Lord Agni' or the god of fire. Enkindling of digestive fire is therefore a principal focus of Ayurveda treatment and restoration of wellness. The menus here encourage eating less and digesting more, while the system rejuvenates by itself according to nature's timing. About 35 days of treatment is an average for new digestive measures to reach all 7 dhatus or tissue levels. Amazing science, yet to be re-discovered in the west!

January 12, 2018

You can imagine that cells expelling long-standing toxins is tiring to the body and mind, so providing for sufficient rest is one of the reasons to be in a setting designed to support patients in the rejuvenation process. Having mostly followed a vegetarian, organic food program from my twenties and an Ayurveda food and lifestyle program since my mid-thirties, fortunately I had much less health challenges than most women my age.

Looking back over my journey these last 3 years of treatment at Vaidyagrama, all three years with 41 days of treatment each cycle during Dec./Jan., now I can more easily observe and value the competence, skill and love of this setting, the supervising physicians and the time-tested Ayurveda methods for restoring health.

The first year was mostly focused on weight management and metabolism. Pitta toxins came out all right, especially from my lower legs that had undergone a staph infection a decade prior. At the time, it was treated with suppressant anti-biotics, so the disease had never left me, but rather retreated to the deeper tissues. Erythematosis developed with the 'dosha' emerging finally from its connective tissue home meanwhile.

So, last year was also focused on long-standing metabolic and lingering skin disturbances. I'd been overweight since menopause from my early forties, or about 2 decades. This year at last, my skin and especially the connective tissue of the lower

legs is maintaining good function and immunity. Some minor vascular damage remains – not bad for 70, I feel!

Weight is also normalizing as my metabolism rejuvenates, effectively reducing the C.O.P.D. Lungs remain weak from whooping cough in infancy and poor self-care. Tomorrow is our weigh-in on Day 41 and our final day of treatment. Then begins the integration and re-building phase of this wonderful treatment program.

January 13, 2018

Last day of treatment today! Such a lovely phase is now closing, and amazing benefits are accruing! Certainly, cleaner physical channels are evident, though perhaps more importantly, are the deepening awarenesses of the direct correlations between mind (thoughts), emotions (feelings), behavioural choices and appetite. With cleaner channel system functions comes greater freedom of choice towards healthy behaviours.

January 14, 2018

Dr. Ramkumar has asked me earlier in the program to present a ‘satsang’ class on the Pulse Assessment according to how I’ve learned from Dr. Lad. With Dr. Lad’s prior permission, today’s the day I was able to offer the discussion, now that our treatment days are complete. Just an hour and a quarter to deliver an overview and some basic skills to our group of fellow patients from all over the world, who seemed to enjoy it.

January 15, 2018

Today much more energy is returning to my system, following the more arduous cleansing phase of treatment. With improved sleep patterns following from a very regular schedule of meals and bedtime routines, provided by the functional structures at Vaidyagrama, I do feel enthusiasm and energy on rising. With it comes more inclination for pranayama, stretching and morning devotional practices.

Today also are scheduled two important meetings, this second day of rest following the treatment phase. Rest is to be an equal number of days as treatment, to help fully integrate the program benefits and avoid the pitfalls of the vulnerabilities of this stage. Hence, our upcoming beachside rest in Kerala.

The first meeting is with a team of volunteers planning the upcoming Punarnava Institute of Ayurveda training programs for the Panchakarma Therapist designation of 1 year and the Spa Therapist designation of 6 months.

Those seeking training here in the past have reported inadequate structure and delivery, so now the announcement by the Punarnava Trust, who delivers the various community services here, is that these programs could be available as earlier as November, 2019. Geetha has requested my help and participation in this academic planning, and I do feel honoured to volunteer my bit by contributing to writing the curriculae.

The other meeting is my personal jyothish reading with a local gentleman, raised in a lineage of jyothishi’s, who are protectors of the local spiritual traditions which have kept Kerala so healthy over millennia.

Check out: <https://www.facebook.com/public/Mahesh-Padur-Panicker>

January 16, 2018

Today important meetings are scheduled to learn more about creating our College and how others here in Tamil Nadu and nearby Kerala (Vaidyagrama is located a few kilometers from the Kerala border at Pallakad) have established similar and now mature research and learning centres.

It is also our third and final day of 'rest' following treatments. Strange to be past the important phase, but life is moving ever forward.

January 17, 2018

Our group's first town day for shopping is today, after being voluntarily confined to hospital for about 6 weeks. Well worth the discipline and taming of the mind's myriad desires, tho'. It was fun to pick out cotton clothing, and shop with the 'girls'. All our intentions were fulfilled by having a good time-keeper (Shelley) and driver (Mr. Ramasomy).

We discovered Coimbatore city to some degree and had our first ride outside this campus, bringing such a deep appreciation of what has been created here over the last decade or so. Having a restaurant lunch proved to be too oily, too salty and too spicy for our tastes, now acquired by healthy eating habits.

January 18, 2018

Today is the most poignant day of our departure to another region of India. Our destination is the Pranav Beach Resort near Kannur in north Kerala, about a 7-hr. day trip through the small towns and villages of Kerala State. This marks the end of our great Ayurveda adventure with panchakarma for now, but we are all eager to return when the time comes.

All are enquiring about our next return here, and we'll have to see how the year unfolds. It will be so fine to come again in November, so let's see what God has in store. This year's payment deadline is Sept. 1st,

Such a warm send-off from doctors, fellow patients and staff! All's well that ends well.