



Restoring our sacred relationship with the Earth



Editorial

“The state of the planet is broken. We must stop our war on nature. Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century. Food systems are one of the main reasons why we are failing to stay within our planet’s ecological boundaries” Antonio Guterres – Secretary-General of The United Nations

Welcome to our January Newsletter. In this edition, we are focussing on how we can restore our sacred relationship with the Earth particularly in relation to how we produce our food. In my working life as a

community dentist, I was constantly struck by the effects that poor diet had on children's teeth. On retirement, I developed a deep love for nature and organic, no dig growing, on a small allotment near my home. Now, I am no Uri Geller, who purports to germinate seeds in the palm of his hand, but I am quietly delighted at the results of only using nature positive methods for cultivating crops, and also as a practitioner of meditation, I notice the real results of greater abundance that comes from mindful growing.

We have long known that children and animals flourish when they are surrounded by loving vibrations and tender care. They wither when they do not. It is no surprise, therefore, that plant life responds in a similar way. In the 1940s, the pesticide DDT was used for the first time, until it was banned for agriculture use in 1972, because of its adverse environmental effects on wildlife and risk to human health. It was considered to be a revolutionary solution to produce more food for more people but natural and safe pesticides created *from* plant life have been used in China, Korea and India for millennia. Perhaps it is time to return to old natural ways of cultivation that nourish the soil by enabling indigenous microorganisms, the engines of soil fertility, to thrive.

It is no coincidence that we refer to nature as Mother. Just like all mothers, she really does 'know best'. She strives constantly to operate with the harmony and balance that she knows is the way that all things flourish. In the face of all the ignorance we have demonstrated, and despite all our interference, Mother Nature is constantly giving nourishment and beauty, refreshing and renewing. It is time to make amends.

It is the understanding of the Brahma Kumaris that a fundamental shift of awareness is needed. A return to the honouring of Mother Nature by understanding how the power of consciousness can substantially strengthen and enhance every stage of the food system, from planting, growing, harvesting to eating.

In this edition we take a close look at the truly powerful and benign enhancement of farming methods and the bountiful results brought about by meditative, yogic practices. Tamasin Ramsey observes how the method of 'yogic farming' is working in India and shows the effects that thought based meditative practices at the seed planting stage of agriculture are producing considerable differences in yield. David Fletcher describes his experiences of food production with the Dagarra people in Ghana. Aishwarya Jagani's article, which appeared in 'Modern Farmer', asks the question: 'Can yogic farming help boost crop yield?' We also invite the reader to participate in a brief meditation on 'Healing the Earth' and to follow a link to a profound conversation, between Dr Vandana Shiva and Sister Jayanti on 'Restoring our Earth'.

Things are changing, and will continue to change as we keep shifting our consciousness and humbly acknowledge the debt we owe to Mother Nature, begin to behave towards her with the honour and respect she deserves, and reflect this in practice.



David Goodman has worked with the Brahma Kumaris for over 40 years. He is part of the team which produced their resources for the UN Food Systems Summit that preceded COP26 www.foodcareinitiatives.org

Yogic agriculture reaping rewards in India



Increasing crop sizes and potential returns is not always about financial investment. Dr Tamasin Ramsay explains how the practice of 'Yogic farming' works in India.

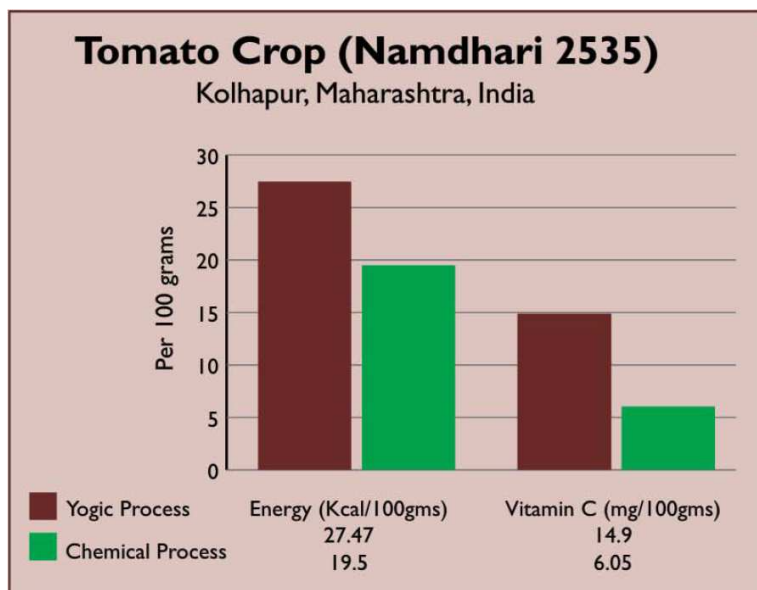
The thought-child of the Rural Wing of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) in India, Sustainable Yogic Agriculture is a unique form of farming that combines thought-based meditative practices with methods of organic agriculture and is bringing clear economic and social benefits to smallholder agrarian communities in India. For more than 75 years, the BKWSU has been teaching methods of personal empowerment based on techniques of Raja Yoga meditation. These methods include understanding the self as a soul, managing the energy of the mind, becoming cognizant of the relationship between thoughts and behavior, maintaining a thought union with the Divine and experiencing transcendental states that fill the mind and character with strength. The BKWSU continually seeks ways in which to apply the benefits of spiritual practice in a way that responds meaningfully to people's lives and daily circumstances. It is now widely acknowledged that to sustain agricultural production, healthy environments, and viable farming communities there must be a whole systems approach to agriculture incorporating traditional knowledge and organic agriculture that links ecology, culture, economics and society. Sustainable Yogic Agriculture utilizes a systems-wide approach, recognising all elements of farming: humans, animals and birds, flying and crawling insects, micro-organisms, seed, vegetation and surrounding ecosystems and the natural elements of sun, soil, air, water and space.

These methods are engaging more than 400 farmers in India with a cooperative of scientists from India's leading agricultural universities, G.B. (Gindh Ballabh) Pant University of Agriculture and Technology and S.D. (Sadarkrushinagar Dantiwada) Agricultural University. Early data indicate statistically significant effects on crop quality and crop yield. Further, meditative practices seed to harvest, are increasing farmers' self-esteem and so reducing the frequency of farmer suicides and social violence in families and villages. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered so far, using laboratory based experiments and participant observation, have provided valuable baseline information that endorse the importance of

continued research.

Research Methods and Data

The experimental land is divided into three parcels: OFM-1 (organic farming techniques), OFM-2 (organic farming techniques + meditation), and CIM (standard chemical farming using fertilizers and pesticides).



Preliminary findings indicate that OFM-2 (organic + meditation) has the greatest soil microbial population, the seeds germinate up to a week earlier. Subsequent crops reveal higher amounts of iron, energy, protein and vitamins compared to OFM-1 (organic) and CIM (chemical). Local farmers determined that the yogic process saves a total of Rs. 14769.00 (\$USD 330) per acre as compared to chemical farming, offering low-cost high-benefit methods for local communities. See below for sample data of a tomato crop indicating levels of Vitamin C and Energy.

Yogic Methods

Seeds are placed in the BKWSU meditation centre where practiced meditators focus thoughts of peace, non-violence, love, strength and resilience on the seed for up to a month before sowing. Regular meditations are conducted remotely and in the fields with specific thought practices designed to support each phase of the crop growth cycle, from empowering seeds and seed germination, through sowing, irrigation and growth, to harvest and soil replenishment.

Benefits for Business

Our goal is to create a more resilient society and a greener economy, while supporting sustainable agrarian practices and strengthening vulnerable communities. In light of this, we offer opportunities for businesses to:

- Support further independent research into Sustainable Yogic Agriculture.
- Disseminate the principles and methods of Sustainable Yogic Agriculture to new audiences.
- Support the production of organic seed and organic agricultural practices.
- Dialogue with us to consider ways this study may be adapted and replicated, to bring benefit to more communities around the world.

In the last few years, businesses that support green, sustainable, and ethical endeavors have garnered significant public interest and support, yet many local and indigenous innovations still remain un-mapped. We invite businesses to work with us to ensure that this important study finds a place in global conversations. Tours within the participating farming communities and research universities in India can be arranged.

For more information on Sustainable yogic farming, please click [here](#)

Putting the culture back into agriculture: an Interview with David Fletcher



David Fletcher puts the case for returning to more traditional forms of growing and preparing food so as to restore our sacred relationship with the land.

David Fletcher has been a community development educator and researcher for over 30 years. He has had the opportunity to work with and learn from indigenous people in Africa, Asia and North America on environmental, climate change, well-being and food security issues. In the following interview David talks about his community development work in Ghana. Read the interview [here](#).

Can Yogic Farming Help Boost Crop Yield?



A recent article by Modern Farmer exploring the effectiveness of Sustainable Yogic Agriculture from India. Modern Farmer is a quarterly American magazine devoted to agriculture and food, founded in April 2013.

The ancient meditation-based practice is said to be a sustainable way to improve crop performance, but the science doesn't yet exist to back that up. Yoga and farming both share a deep connection with nature. And while yoga classes on farms—including goat yoga and chicken yoga—have grown in popularity in recent years, the term “yogic farming” has an entirely different meaning. The little-known farming system originated from the Brahma Kumaris spiritual movement in India in the early 2000s. Yogic farming combines organic farming methods with meditation and relies on the power of thought to improve seed quality and increase crop yields. Multiple small-scale experiments conducted over the years indicate that yogic farming, in addition to being highly sustainable, can be cheaper than conventional farming and result in a better-quality crop output. Read further to understand [more](#).

Restore Our Earth - A conversation between Dr Vandana Shiva and Sister Jayanti



This event was to mark Earth Day and London Climate Action Week in 2021

This is a video of a conversation between Dr Vandana Shiva, activist and environmentalist and Sister Jayanti, Additional Head of the Brahma Kumaris and spiritual leader. Both speakers felt that our natural relationship with 'Mother Earth' as trustees had been broken due to a global culture of consumerism and exploitation that had gathered momentum over the last 50 years. Dr Vandana Shiva saw back in the 80s that agriculture had become 'violent' and damaging to the Earth with its use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Sister Jayanti felt that to rectify this we need to come back to a state of self-respect, knowing ourselves as spiritual beings, then naturally we have respect for others and nature. Both speakers agreed that a shift in mindset was needed, so that we can learn to work in harmony with nature by making choices that are beneficial for both ourselves and the planet. Dr Shiva reminds us: "Eating itself is a spiritual and ecological act of reconnecting."

You can watch the video [here](#).

Meditation



This meditation was recorded to send healing vibrations to the natural elements of the earth. Listen to the meditation commentary [here](#).

For more of such meditation commentaries please click [here](#).