

Miscellaneous *Kvetching*

I overheard one woman talking about stress. She could have stress? Her nanny calls in her nonfat grande mocha lattes to Starbucks, for God's sake!

But she was *kvetching* at least.

You know what's wrong with yoga? They haven't mastered the art of *kvetching*. The *kvetch*, or complaint, is at the heart of *Yiddishkeit*. If you *kvetch*, you can at least let off steam, make believe you have control over things that go wrong. And I don't need to tell you that, historically speaking, things haven't been so *gezunt* for the Jewish people.

I feel like everyone's trying to be so damned happy in yoga classes. Oprah has her gratitude journal, which is fine. But we need a *kvetching* club!

At the top of my list? Why do people say to me, "Ruthie, if it doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger"? I'm strong enough, yet still weak with grief.

For me, a little *kvetching* is the aerobics for the heart's longing.

Matsyasan: Fish Pose

Fish Pose is so delicious to do after Shoulder Stand, considered the queen of poses. It opens up all the muscles in the shoulders and increases circulation to the neck too. Oh, if my mother had only known about Fish Pose—she had such rounded shoulders!

In Fish Pose, I picture *gefilte* fish—and Harry wanting me to make it from scratch. But Rokeach makes it so good—but you have to know how to doctor it up!

Then I realize I am having a conversation about *gefilte* fish with a dead man...while the rest of the class has moved on to Dolphin Pose.

Tapas

Sammy was telling us about *tapas*. I thought he said, "Topless," and all through class, I pictured topless dancers saluting the sun.

Tapas does not refer to little Spanish *noshes*, either. In yoga, *tapas* means to have a burning zeal in practice, to be enthusiastic for health. **And by the way, the word "enthusiasm," it turns out, originally means receiving the breath of God.**

Sometimes I feel like the whole world is connected through words and the roots of words. *Tapas*, *topless*, *nebbish*, *blemish*, *yiddish*, *tuches*, *pulkes*, *gornisht*, *witch*, *Dorothy*, *wizard*, *blizzard*. A paradise of Babel, where we all understand each other perfectly!

Most of the time, I feel like we're all just kicking each other in the ass with our fancy words.

You *nosh* on me and I *nosh* on you. A dog-eat-dog rat race. Or is that a Downward-Facing-Dog rat race?

Personally *I* am enthusiastic about an Epsom salt bath to soak my aching arms. Topless.

Om and Amen

Sammy pointed out that the Sanskrit *Om* and the Hebrew *Amen* bear a remarkable resemblance. When we chant *Om* and press our lips together at the end, you can feel the vibrations reverberate through your heart.

Something's changing inside me. We chanted for an extra long time today in honor of the spring solstice.

Ommmmmmmmmm.
Ommmmmmmmmm.
Ommmmmmmmmm.

It was as though Harry were giving me his blessing.

"It's time, Ruthie. What did we always say? That life is for the living. Where there is breath, there is life. You are still a vital woman, *meine liebe* -- my love—so beautiful and lithe. Go. Ruthie. Go find a man. Go live, my love. *Amen*."

Excerpts from Yiddish Glossary

kepeleh—Head. This is how I remember *kapalabhati* breathing means "head breathing."

kvell—To take pride in, or great joy in something or someone, as I do in my granddaughter Stephanie.

kvetch—To complain, as in "If the yoga teacher doesn't arrive in five minutes, I'm leaving."

matzo ball mulligawtawny soup—My delicious and nutritious ecumenical soup! (See recipe page 61.)

maven—A really knowledgeable person. Sammy is a yoga maven.

mazel tov—Good luck. When I told Stephanie my injury wasn't so bad, she said, "*Mazel tov*," as in "Thank God."

mekhaye—A pleasure, which is *savasana* after 90 minutes of *schvitzing* (sweating).

mensch—A human being; an upright, honorable, decent person. Sammy is a real *mensch* and he says so am I. Okay—so we have a little mutual admiration society going on, who does it hurt?

meshugana—A crazy man, wild, nuts. "How do you expect me to do these *meshugana* poses?"

mitzvah—A good deed. My Stephe did a *mitzvah* by giving me this year of yoga.

nosh—A snack, which I was looking for on my first day of yoga class. I love to *nosh* on a good prune danish and a cup of coffee, but not before yoga, as it repeats on me.

oy vey—Literally, this expression means "Oh, it hurts," but it can be used to express surprise, as in "Oy vey, this Tree Pose is challenging my legs!"

schvitz—To sweat, which I do in Sammy's classes. Helps me stay svelte!

shain maidela—A beautiful girl, like my granddaughter, Stephanie. Just look at her in those yoga poses—I am so proud of her.

shalom—Peace in Hebrew; also a greeting, as in "*Shalom*, how are you?"

tush—Derriere, rear end. You have to lift your *tush* up to the heavens in Downward Dog.