



July 2015

### **Inspire and Move:**

If you like to practice yoga while travelling or like to have a class to follow at home when you cannot make it into the studio we have produced a 60-minute all levels practice called ***Inspire and Move*** for just that purpose. Hamish teaches the class while he and Margo practice. The class is saved to a USB stick so it is very compact and you can play it back on any device with a USB port and a suitable program (e.g. Windows Media Player). The cost is just \$40 and you may purchase ***Inspire and Move*** from reception at Apollo Power Yoga's studio.

One of our students took the ***Inspire and Move*** with them on holiday over the last few weeks and did the class with a friend. Hamish received an email from the friend asking for a copy to be sent to her as she enjoyed it so much.

### **Step to Your Edge Now:**

Make a commitment to yourself now and revolutionise your way of breathing, your way of feeling, and your way of seeing the world and the people in it. How? Simply by getting on to your mat and practicing. The time you spend practicing yoga bears fruit in all aspects of your life. The meditative nature of our vinyasa practice will shift your bio-chemistry and bring you into a state of equanimity, at one with the world regardless of the life struggles we all have in one form or another.

The vigour of our vinyasa practice will stir vital energy within you, making you feel more alive and up to whatever awaits you in your day. Hunkering down against the cold of winter can be counter-productive as it creates a lethargy and energetic stagnation in us. Light an energetic fire within yourself with a strong, flowing practice, engaging major muscle groups throughout your entire body.



Stop engaging in your story (you know the one: I'm not good enough; I'm not worthy; no-one appreciates me; whatever). Your best thinking has brought you to this point. Thinking over your story and fortifying it with fresh evidence

is not the way forward. Start feeling and listening and connecting with your centre, your true self. Where better to achieve this than on your mat working with body, mind, breath and core spirit?

Your commitment to yourself will have rewards in the way you feel about yourself, the way you relate with the people in your life, the way you handle the peaks and troughs of daily existence. The way you currently live your life is business as usual. You are clinging to that like you are holding onto a trapeze and are scared of falling. To catch the next trapeze you have to let go. Get on your mat, disrupt business as usual and be the change you want to see in your life.

### Workshops:

On **Sunday 23 August** at midday we are running **Tricks and Transitions**. This not-to-be-missed workshop will give you the opportunity to try out some more advanced postures that appear less frequently in regular classes and also to practice the linking of various poses in some challenging flows. What about *galavasana* into *kundinyasana* into *astavakrasana*? You do not need to be expert to attend this workshop but it is not recommended for absolute beginners. We will keep things fun and seek to equip you with tools to bring some additional lightness and playfulness into your practice. The cost is \$60.00 (annual members pay half price). Book NOW!

**40 Days to Personal Revolution** will run again **beginning on Sunday 18 October**. There will be 6 Sunday sessions finishing on 22 November. An optional seventh session with a lunch provided by Margo and Hamish will take place on 29 November. The second session is during Labour Day weekend. Attendance at all the weekend sessions is not necessary. If you were planning to be away over the long

weekend of 24, 25 and 26 October you can still participate in the 40 Days programme. The cost is \$300.00 including a copy of Baron Baptiste's book, *40 Days to Personal Revolution*). For annual members the cost is \$170.00 (including the book). For more details email [hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz](mailto:hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz), but mark your diaries now.

### Asana Spotlight:

*Pincha mayurasana* (feathered peacock) is a forearm balance. It has some additional stability relative to headstand (because your forearms are at the floor giving a foundation akin to classical headstand) but stability is also compromised somewhat because the capacity to adjust your position over your base (wobble room) is limited to the length of your upper arms as opposed to the full length of your arms in handstand.

- Begin kneeling on the floor. Set your elbows on the mat in front of you, shoulder width distance apart. Lay your forearms flat to the floor with the palms of your hands on the mat and your fingers wide spread. Your forearms need to be parallel at shoulder width distance.
- There is a powerful tendency as you come up into this pose to have your elbows skew apart further and your forearms to angle inwards towards one another. This causes a loss of power in your arms and is to be resisted. When learning this pose it helps to have a block between your hands with your thumbs pointing towards one another along the near edge of the block and your index fingers pointing forward away from you along the outer edges of the block. The resistance of the block helps keep your arms in good alignment.
- Lift your knees off the floor raising your hips as high as you can manage. If possible walk your feet forward in small steps to bring your hips as close as possible to vertical over your elbows and shoulders.

Your head does not rest at the floor in this pose but hovers an inch or two off the mat. Your chin lifts away from your throat and your *dristhi* is at the floor between your arms.

- Press onto the balls of your feet then raise one leg back and up towards the sky. Maintain an internal rotation of that leg. Reach through that foot towards the sky with the intention “Up!”
- Firm inwards at your abdomen, engaging *uddiyana bandha*. It is important that you keep this engagement throughout the pose. If you lose *uddiyana bandha* your low back will tend to collapse into a sway and your legs will pull over behind you.
- Engage the inner thigh of the grounded leg and thrust off the floor. With an internal rotation of that leg reach it up to meet the already raised leg. Keep your inner thighs engaged and your feet reaching powerfully for the sky.



- You may feel your balance shifting through the length of your forearms. Make your hands active at the floor, pressing down

and utilising your finger tips to hold your balance.

- Use the serratus muscles that wrap around your side from your shoulder blade to your chest to keep your elbows and upper arms drawing inwards.
- Breathe deeply and powerfully.
- Should you over-balance and start to fall over backwards the fact that your forearms are on the floor limits your capacity to twist and drop safely out of the pose as you would do from a handstand. You may choose to practice this pose close enough to a wall that you can stop your fall by bringing your feet to the wall behind you. You could then push off the wall with your feet and land back safely where you began the pose. If you have a deep back bend you may be able to allow your back to bend and lower your feet towards the floor behind you, coming into *viparita dhanurasana* (wheel pose on your forearms). The best option is to endeavour to take one leg and then the other (or both together) back towards the front side of your body allowing yourself to come back safely to your starting position.

When you invert your body you receive a powerful rush – significant increased fluid pressure builds in your head, your glands (thyroid, pituitary and pineal) are charged with energy, and you gain a wonderful sense of personal strength bearing your weight on your arms. All of this is present in *pincha mayurasana*. Allow yourself to love these strong sensations. Acquire a familiarity with them and a taste for them over time. As challenging as an inversion may be, it has a chill effect on us – just look at how languid a sloth can be and they are upside down most of the time.

**From Baron Baptiste:**



### **Apollo's Birthday Present:**

We are coming up to Apollo Power Yoga's second birthday at the end of July. We feel very blessed to be part of this community of awesome yogis, so we are celebrating by becoming a proud supporter of the **Heart Research Institute**.

This organisation works to detect, prevent and treat heart disease. Currently, 40% of New Zealanders suffer from heart disease during their lives, meaning that this disease affects 2 out of every 3 NZ families. The Heart Research Institute has made significant findings that have changed the way we live with and treat the world's number one killer, working across a field of research areas to identify factors which contribute to an increased risk of heart disease. Understanding the underlying causes of heart disease is the key to finding a solution.

The Apollo Power Yoga vinyasa series is great for your cardiovascular system and overall health. And the Apollo Power Yoga studio is the beating heart of the Christchurch Central City Recovery. Now, in celebration of two years of all this great stuff, we're supporting the Heart Research Institute and contributing to the heart health of our wider community.

### **Africa Yoga Project**

The Africa Yoga Project is an amazing programme that builds peace, community and empowerment in Africa. Since it was started by the Baptiste Foundation in Kenya in 2007, the programme has trained and employed hundreds of yoga teachers. These teachers provide free yoga classes to thousands of people every week, in every place imaginable – the slums of Nairobi, rural villages, prisons, schools, HIV/AIDS support groups – everywhere! People taking part in the classes are finding ways to stop the cycles of violence that many of them have grown up with, and live their lives in peace and connection with each other.

The yoga teachers who are trained and employed by AYP receive a wage (\$US125/month) which enables them to support their extended families and others. Amongst youth (ages 16 to 35) in Kenya, the unemployment rate is a staggering 80%! The large majority of this age group have little option but to turn to crime and prostitution in order to live. But through the AYP, they have the option of training as yoga teachers and then providing free yoga classes in their communities and beyond.

If you can support the Africa Yoga Project with a donation, please do so. Go onto the website [www.africayogaproject.org](http://www.africayogaproject.org) and give what you can to help AYP spread yoga, peace and community throughout Africa.

### **Matters Philosophical:**

Over the course of the last two years we have, through this magazine, given an outline and overview of two of the pre-eminent yoga texts, namely, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. What, you may wonder, is the relevance of these texts, 2000 years or more old as they are, to our lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century CE? With their talk of invisible yogis

and devotion to god and hour upon hour committed to meditation can they really be a guide for us in our times? So many of us these days are rationalists who look askance at the notion of god. So many of us are sceptics and discount some of the meta-physical benefits of yoga. Instead, we seek the affirmation of science that *uttanasana* will, as a matter of empirical fact, cause our hamstrings to become longer. We have jobs and families and pastimes that we pursue and have no time, nor indeed patience, for meditation.

In supposing we are so very different in our lives now from those who lived 100 years, or 500 years or two millennia ago we are mistaken. The human condition is now very much as it has been. We, now, are just as prone as those who lived thousands of years ago to be attracted to other people and to experience jealousy if those to whom we are attracted are romantically connected with someone else. We are just as likely to want the physical trappings of wealth displayed by others and to feel covetous envy in respect of those people and their belongings. We are just as prone to uncertainty about our future and anxiety for the well-being of our children. We are equally as subject to grief when those for whom we care die. We are as averse to pain and as drawn to pleasure as any humans at any stage of history – even though the detail of the forms of pain and pleasure may have altered over the intervening centuries.

There is much that we may learn from the ancient yogic texts, even if we reject some of the asserted but unproven consequences of engagement in yoga practice as both a physical exercise and as a way of being or lifestyle. Let us consider these three things: god, invisibility and meditation.



Throughout human existence the inexplicable has been explained by means of gods. Why is there wind? How does the sun go across the sky every day? What is lightning and thunder? What happens to the person I identify as myself when my body dies? All these sorts of questions have been resolved by all cultures with reference to gods. In law, the occurrence of an “act of God” exonerates parties from liability for the consequences of such an event. Even in science where there is so much unexplained, recourse is still had to the idea of god. An example is the use of the expression “God particle” for the Higgs boson, a phenomenon that goes towards explaining a gap in the theory of the creation of the universe and the observed atomic particles.

Yet, now that we are so scientifically knowledgeable, we see rational explanations for many things hitherto explained as being a manifestation of god. Further, the notion of god has been wrapped up in the idea of religion and religions have not always been used well by their adherents with the consequence that those who believe in god have been associated with, for instance, child abuse in the Catholic Church or suicide bombings by members of radical Muslim sects. The idea of a god who looks like a person and cares and is involved in the minutiae of our daily activities can seem far-fetched. Albert Einstein, who spoke of god and described himself as agnostic rather than

atheist, regarded such notions of god with disbelief. Einstein said, "I believe in [Spinoza's](#) God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and the doings of mankind."

The notion of god, a higher power, can be a solace to people. It can give a sense of reason and purpose to ethical responsibility. It can guide us away from a self-centred view of the universe into a view based more on our connections with one another and all things. If we start to view the life that runs through us as being the same as that running through all other living things and the same as that which has run through all things since the beginning of time and will continue to run through things in the future, then we can build a sense of harmony with our world rather than disharmony based upon us defining ourselves by our differences rather than our commonalities.

In turn, identification with the living world will connect us with the inanimate world and we will feel a congruence with all nature: the water, the air, the earth and its resources. If we feel the entirety of creation, past, present and future, to be connected and part of a great unity, that is akin to the *Gita* telling us that god is in all things and that all things share in that divinity. We can see ourselves in everything and everything in ourselves. If we harm another person, or an animal or pollute the earth we harm ourselves because we are all connected. What other name have we for the phenomenon of being universal and eternal, but god? The notion of god, therefore, speaks to a form of outlook – do we perceive ourselves to be distinct and separate, or do we perceive ourselves as being part of a seamless thread that runs throughout the whole tapestry of the universe(s) and throughout all time?

Invisibility. The idea of the invisible yogi was raised in the *Sutras*. It is given as an

accomplishment of the most advanced yogis who have perfected the art of non-attachment. It sounds nonsensical but it may not even have been meant literally at the time the *Sutras* were compiled. The notion of non-attachment is very valuable, however. We suffer when we become too attached to people and things. Our fear at the idea of losing them, our grief at the loss of them, our jealousy at wanting them but not having them, our unethical pursuit of them, are all adverse consequences of feeling attachment to people and things.

Tolstoy wrote a story called "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" The main character, Pakhom, sought land and wealth and upward social and economic mobility. He paid for the right to purchase a large tract of good land and the bargain entitled him to as much land as he could walk around in a day. Pakhom overreached himself in his greed. As the day drew to an end he had not returned to his starting point, a necessary term of the bargain. He strove onwards, straining every fibre of his being in a desperate attempt to complete the round trip around the land he wished to buy. Alas, he strove too hard. His heart failed, he died and the plot of land in which he was buried was, in the end, all the land he needed. This parable illustrates attachment at its worst. We lose sight of what is right and necessary and become consumed with avarice.



I had the opportunity to interview a number of senior lawyers and judges who had all been in partnership with each other in the 1960s. They

had sided with each other against another of their partners in a dispute over money and profit shares. In 1970 when the stoush came to its peak, they were governed by money in their decision-making. When I interviewed them in about 2008, they all looked back on the events of 1970 with regret and counted the personal toll. They lost a friend. They lost some self-respect. They felt, with the benefit of hindsight, shame at having been so concerned with monetary rewards when none had been in a state of need.

Our society requires us to support ourselves if we are able and to that end we work and earn. But it is not necessary for us to earn at any income threshold or demonstrate any trappings of wealth. We impose upon ourselves the burden of looking good and become attached to the things that we associate with looking good.

Death is a certainty in our lives and yet it often levies a great personal burden on those who survive their loved ones. Accepting the inevitable and letting go of attachment to a person, to what they meant for us in terms of our lifestyle and to the emotions that they evoke in us, can be very liberating. Pain in life is inevitable but suffering is optional. We can feel the pain of separation from a loved one but if we are too attached we will nurture that pain into suffering, making the loss an occasion for debilitating grief rather than a vicissitude of life to be borne stoically. We may not be able to detach from the hold that light has upon us to become invisible, but we can achieve a detachment from the attraction to pleasure and the aversion towards pain that, from what the *Gita* calls the sense objects, and practice *bramachariya* (continence) and *aparigraha* (non-covetousness), two of the *yamas* described in the *Sutras*.

Meditation. The principal hurdle that people advance for not meditating is that they do not

have time. The second is that they cannot meditate. To address the first reason, it is exactly when you are pushed for time that taking time to be still is most beneficial. Meditation, described by the Arab philosopher Rumi as “just sitting”, operates on the nervous system. By sitting still and breathing deeply you shift your bio-chemistry and balance the tendency of the sympathetic nervous system, with its fight, flight or freeze reactions, with a strengthening of the parasympathetic nervous system. The latter nervous system triggers the production of hormones associated with calm and relaxation in your body.



When you have meditated you are more likely to respond to challenges in your day in a moderate, reflective manner rather than a rushed, reactive manner. You are less prone to error or inefficiency due to haste. You are less prone to engaging in conflict and allowing relations to be soured with your family, friends, work colleagues or anyone else you come into contact with. In terms of temperament and the way you interact with the world, you are a different person the day you meditate from the day you do not. This enhances our emotional intelligence. When we are not caught in the trap of self-absorption but relax and give ourselves critical distance from events and their effects upon us, we have improved empathy and connection with others and our relations with all people are improved.

You say you cannot meditate? How do you know? What time, energy and commitment

have you brought to the endeavour of meditation? Meditation is a practice and like any other practice it gets easier over time. There are days when it comes less easily and days when it comes more readily. But one ought not to defeat oneself at the outset with the notion that I CAN not and let that attitude ossify into I WILL not. Take the time, and the morning is best, to simply sit, breathe and bring your mental focus to a point through calm concentration. Each time something distracts you and pulls you into the thought stream, realise that notion out of existence and come back to your focus. You might use the mental device suggested by Eckhart Tolle in *The Power of Now* of asking yourself, "I wonder what my next thought will be?" Sit and watch with that question having been posed and observe how long it is before a thought does intrude on your peace.

Why else should we meditate? There is evidence to suggest that meditation: slows the aging process as in a meditative state telomerase (an enzyme that builds sheaths protecting our DNA and which, as we age, shorten and allow the degradation of the DNA) production is healthier and our DNA degenerates more slowly: as we meditate we focus more on our breath, breathe more deeply and feed our brains more oxygen producing better brain activity and thought processes and less stress and anxiety; inflammatory and stress response genes are decreased and energy metabolism and insulin secretion genes are increased; depressiveness is decreased and mental functioning is improved.

Resting your mind, refreshes your mind in the same way that resting any other over-worked part of your being brings you refreshment. Meditation is a further step on the way to non-attachment. As we detach from even our thoughts we come to understand that our true self is not represented by any single thought

nor any collection of thoughts but is, instead, distinct from and is merely the observer of the thoughts we have.

All cultures have recognised the value of calm, meditative time. Now that our lives are so pressured, that our entire day, waking and asleep, is governed by time constraints and deadlines, it is all the more important for our mental health and the balance of our nervous system that we take the opportunity for timelessness. We ought to relinquish the need to be remembering and thinking ahead and commit ourselves very simply to the now moment. Both the *Sutras* and the *Gita* advocate meditation and the value the practice had two thousand years ago has not been diminished by those intervening years.

Any ancient text is written in light of its context. Our modern context is superficially very different from that which prevailed at the time of the authorship of the *Sutras* and the *Gita*. Yet the human condition has not changed and we ought not to discard as irrelevant in modern times the wisdom of the past simply because our environment is altered. Look at yourself and all people and things in the world from a new perspective of commonality and embrace the notion that we are all one. Detach from the covetousness and incontinent desires that bring misery and suffering to you. You may not detach from the ability for light to shine on you but you may release some cause of disharmony in your life. Take time to be still and breathe. You will experience the world in a new way and the world will gain a new experience of you.

### **Mat Storage:**

As from 1 August people other than annual members will be able to store their mats at Apollo Power Yoga. For only \$10 per month or part thereof you may keep your mat rolled up in a compartment in the new mat storage bin

in reception. Please ask at reception if you wish to store your mat and we will allocate you a spot, take your payment for the month and you may leave your mat at the studio for that month. If you choose not to store your mat at a future date just let us know and we will allocate your spot to someone else. If you continue to store your mat with us in succeeding months just pay us the monthly fee on your first visit to the studio each month.

**Parking:**

Please take care when parking not to park over entry/exit points for other properties. Avonmore, located on Hereford Street just to the east of Colombo Street have had problems with people parking on yellow lines in front of a ramp and roller door to their underground parking. We appreciate that finding parking places can be difficult and have lobbied the City Council and made submissions on behalf of drivers in public consultation processes but drivers must also have consideration for other businesses and their access rights. Thank you.

Namaste

©Hamish Kenworthy and Margo Perpick 2015

