



March 2015

### Mat Storage:

We have new partitioned boxes in which annual members may store their mats. We ask that annual members please roll your mats and place them in the named partitions in the boxes in reception. Thank you.

We are prepared to provide similar storage for students other than annual members if there is the demand for mat storage. We would do this for a small monthly charge to cover the cost of the construction of the storage boxes. If you are interested, please email Hamish with "Mat Storage – Yes" in the subject line to hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz.

### Workshops:

No workshops were scheduled for March as we run weekly sessions for the 40 Days participants on Sundays. Our next studio workshop will be on Sunday, 26 April 2015 at midday. It is a repeat of the **Baddhas and Bandhas** workshop we ran last year. This workshop will help you learn about engaging the main bandhas but more generally learning about stability in your poses, as well as twisting and binding. The ability to bind your arms in a pose comes from an ability to twist. We will help you to access your fullest range of mobility in this workshop. The cost is \$50.00 (annual members half price). More details soon at the studio and on Facebook.

### 40 Days to Personal Revolution – Progress:

We are five weeks into the 40 Days to Personal Revolution programme. A great group of 17 people is participating. There have been some great insights and personal breakthroughs. The group is feeling the vital energy that comes from daily yoga practice, meditation, cleansing nutritional habits and inquiry into their ways of being.



Another 40 Days to Personal Revolution programme will be run in the spring time.

### From Baron Baptiste:

*I would take a pose and create drishti, ujjayi, bandha and go for the full expression of it, but I used to think certain poses were boring. I've discovered that a pose is only interesting when I'm interested. When interested, I have access to what's possible. Possibility possesses gold. Being interested keeps me "in" when my mind wants "out". Every time the voice in my head tells me to quit or take child's pose, I don't. Instead, I get inspired and come face-to-face with an opportunity to dig deeper, get stronger and*

*expand my comfort zone. Being interested keeps us in flow... birthing a new found confidence which spreads to all things, on and off the mat.*



### **Asana Spotlight:**

This month we move on one step from plow pose to *karnipadasana* (deaf man's pose). This is a powerful stretch and opening to the back as well as being a great way to find internal focus and meditative awareness as you draw in from external distraction to internal direction.

The same cautions we gave in the last two issues of this magazine about inversions still apply with deaf man's pose: there is pressure on the lower cervical spine (C6 and C7). Do not try to push through pain in your neck. Take care and feel free to use folded blankets under your shoulders. The use of blankets will both cushion your shoulders and reduce the degree of forward flexion of your neck. Iyengar recommends using your yoga mat over the top of the blankets so you still have the gripping qualities of your mat at play.

- Follow all the steps described in last month's magazine to come into plow pose.



- Reaching your feet as far back over your head to the floor as you can to bring your hips over your shoulders, bend your knees and let them sink down towards the floor. Draw your knees inwards towards your ears rather than letting your inner thighs collapse and splay apart.
- Your knees may very well not come all the way to the floor. If they do not, avoid forcing that outcome as this may strain either your neck or some other part of your back. If your knees are a small distance off the floor that is fine.
- You may either stay with the preferred arm position of plow (your arms flat to the floor reaching towards the front of your mat) or you may take your hands to the soles of your feet (as in the picture), your ankles, or your calves. If you feel as if you are going to roll out onto your mat without support at your back you may bend at the elbows and support your back with your hands, *à la* shoulder stand.
- If you feel claustrophobic or at all panicky here, assess whether you are simply having a reactive experience based on the unfamiliarity of this profound compression of the front side of your body and stretch of your back. If you are, slow your breathing, understanding that breathing becomes more difficult here as the compression of your chest inhibits full inflation of your lungs. Choose composure over reactivity and relax with the pose.
- Stay for 10 slow breaths, or more if you feel relaxed and comfortable, and then slowly lower out, vertebra by vertebra, to the floor, using your legs as a counterweight and lower your legs to the floor last of all. Take a few breaths lying flat to assimilate the effects of Deaf Man's Pose in you.

Deaf Man's Pose is a highly restorative position. It encourages a profound internal focus. Hear and feel your breath, your heartbeat and the rhythms of your body and

be soothed as you were surrounded by the sounds of your mother's uterus. You are safe.

### **Budokon® Yoga at Apollo Power Yoga:**

The Budokon® Yoga Primary series is being offered at Apollo Power Yoga on Saturday afternoons at 4:30pm in place of the former Power All Levels class in that timeslot. Budokon® Yoga is a fusion of the martial and the yogic.

It is a transition-based practice that incorporated the dynamism and motion of martial arts together with the poise, position and grace of yoga. The outcome is a very powerful sequence that calls for real strength and courage as well as great mind-body connection as your feet move independently and your arms move independently both from each other and from your feet to create a fluid fight dance.



The actions of the feet are a major change from traditional yoga practice. You will be required to shift your feet simultaneously and in ways unfamiliar to those grounded solely in hatha yoga. The standing balancing series of most yoga classes allows you to anchor one foot and then, from that stable foundation, take varying positions with your upper body. In Budokon® Yoga, you will come into balancing positions on one foot in a more dynamic way and you are even asked to hop and spin in the opposite direction on one foot – not as easy as it sounds!

You will use your upper body differently from most yoga practice and will learn to access the power of your shoulders, lateral muscles and serratus anterior muscles to create a strong, downward pressing form called Cobra Hood. This

is a key foundation for hand balancing and will change your experience of the transitions in and out of downward facing dog and upward facing dog.

At Apollo we are motivated to bring you into growth. Hamish has found this Budokon® practice to offer him fields of growth potential and we look forward to having you join us in trying on this new way of movement.

Apollo Power Yoga will be offering one Budokon® practice per week from Saturday 21 March 2015.

### **Bhagavad Gita:**

In this issue we discuss Chapter 11 (The Yoga Vision of the Cosmic Form) and Chapter 12 (The Yoga of Devotion).

Chapter 11 begins with Arjuna asking to see Krishna in his cosmic form. Arjuna says he has been told and understands the mastery of the Self and now wishes to see the divine in all its power.

Krishna grants Arjuna's request but tells him that he could not perceive Krishna in his cosmic form with his physical eyes. They could not embrace everything and are inherently limited. Instead, Krishna confers upon Arjuna spiritual vision which will allow him to see in a more complete way.

"Behold my Yoga Ishvara (supreme God)" says Krishna. Arjuna is overwhelmed as he sees the manifold universe in its entirety with its many levels and divisions, all resting in their essential oneness.

Arjuna describes to Krishna the many ways in which he sees him: all the creatures that have ever been at all levels of evolution constituted at once in the body of Krishna; the entire cosmos; the eternal guardian of timeless wisdom; endlessness with no beginning, middle or conclusion; and infinite power.

Observing Krishna in this way, Arjuna gains insight into the power of Krishna and becomes fearful praying to Krishna that he be merciful.

Arjuna also began to see the future and part of the future was the destruction of his enemies on

the battlefield on which they stood. The destruction is great and again Arjuna is fearful. When he reveals this fear to Krishna, the powerful god tells him not to be concerned because Krishna had determined that Arjuna's enemies would fall and Arjuna was to be Krishna's instrument in that.

In some respects this contemplates the notion of visualisation used by many successful sports people and businesspeople. By feeling a sense of personal power and imagining the outcome one desires, one sets in train the process of achieving that outcome. Arjuna, by sensing the invincibility of Krishna, who he has chosen to be on his side in the battle, perceives the future in the sense of the battle being won. Arjuna, in stark contrast to his state of mind at the commencement of the *Gita*, now is emboldened and believes he will be victorious.

Arjuna apologises to Krishna for the occasions when he has been less than completely respectful towards him, realising the dishonour he has done Krishna now that Arjuna understands the absoluteness of Krishna's power and magnificence.

Krishna concludes the chapter by saying that not everyone can share Arjuna's glimpse of Krishna's cosmic form. Those who get to do so must first have desired Krishna above all else and must have shed all selfish attachments and feelings of ill-will toward and other creature.

Chapter 12 is called the Yoga of Devotion. In India there is a concept of Bhakti Yoga which is a way of being based upon devotion to the deities. In this chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna explains all that is involved in this devotional practice.

The chapter commences as Arjuna asks Krishna what is better: to worship Krishna in a manifest form or in his unmanifest state.

Krishna replies that devotional worship of him is good in either way but will be more difficult in the unmanifest form because the human mind has so much difficulty comprehending that absoluteness. It is much easier to envisage Krishna in a finite and recognisable state for the purposes of worship.

Krishna then explains different levels of devotion. All of which are valuable in bringing people into a connection with him. The first level has those who renounce all attachment to the fruits of their actions, who desire Krishna above all else, and who, through yoga practices, meditate upon Krishna in a single-minded way.

These devotees are released from the illusory drama of life and death and experience the infinite.

At the next level are those who are not so completely immersed in their devotion but, nonetheless, practice bringing their mind back to their deity through regular spiritual practice – *Abhyasa Yoga*.

At another step down Krishna says one may approach perfection through *Karma Yoga* – dedicating all your actions to him, with no concern for them being for one's own personal benefit.

Finally, Krishna says that a person's mind will become calm and they will find refuge in Krishna by surrendering ego and dropping all expectation of personal rewards from one's actions.

*Sloka* (verse) 12 is a famous one:

*Wisdom is better than mindless practice.  
Meditation is above wisdom. Above meditation  
is renunciation of attachment to the fruits of  
your life. Peace immediately follows  
renunciation.*



A golfer can be used as an example of this. If a golfer becomes so concerned with where their ball will end up after being hit they can lose

presence to the simple process of hitting the ball. They get the yips. If the golfer trusts the process and gives themselves fully to the swing they have practiced and honed then the outcome will take care of itself – the ball will fly true and straight.

The commentary to *The Living Gita: the Complete Bhagavad Gita* ©1988, 2013 by Sri Swami Satchidananda speaks of people learning prayers or religious rites by rote and reciting them in an automatic way with no appreciation of their meaning. The commentary calls for people to know the purpose of their devotional practices and hold that purpose firmly in mind as they act.

Most of the remainder of the chapter is a list of characteristics of the true devotee:

- Hate no creatures.
- Be friendly and compassionate.
- Feel connection with others.
- Stay calm in pain and pleasure.
- Be forgiving.
- Be steady of mind through meditation.
- Have strong and consistent convictions.
- Be undisturbed by the world and do not disturb the world.
- Are not victims of their own fear, envy or worry.
- Be fair to all.
- Worship the same self in friend and foe alike.
- Take refuge in silence.

The list goes on at length, always pursuing the same theme of selflessness and detachment from earthly goods.

The final *sloka* of the chapter states:

*Those who take to heart this immortal dharma and become full of faith, and seek God as life's highest goal are the true devotee's and my (Krishna's) love for them is boundless.*

In our next issue we will look over Chapters 13 (Yoga of the Field and Its Knower) and 14 (Yoga of the Three Qualities of Nature).

### **Private Alignment Lessons:**

Book with Hamish to have your alignment reviewed in a private session where he will video record you in certain poses or in transitions and

you can see for yourself how you are moving and where even subtle shifts in alignment will bring you into a more powerful expression of your body and aid your practice and its development.



Call Hamish (021 0551884 or 3656740) or email [hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz](mailto:hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz), to arrange a session to make your practice the best it can be.

### **Power Vinyasa for Pregnant Women – Carry On!**

We've had very positive feedback to our article in the February issue about Power Vinyasa and Restore practices for pregnant women. One of our regular yogis is a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. After reading the article, he told us that he thinks a Power Vinyasa practice is a great, low impact way for pregnant women to keep fit during their pregnancies. He said that one of the problems he sees in his medical practice is women who stop exercising during pregnancy, and then put on too much weight and lose muscle tone. This makes it harder for them to get back into good shape after delivery. So, carry on with your Power Vinyasa practice preggies!

Margo can work with you privately to teach you modifications if you need them. E-mail her, [margo@apollopoweryoga.co.nz](mailto:margo@apollopoweryoga.co.nz) or call her on 027 2272026.

And on the subject of pregnancy, if you are trying to get pregnant make sure that you take folic acid supplements. This is an essential nutrient for the healthy development of your baby's spinal cord, especially in the first few weeks of pregnancy,

when you might not know yet that you're pregnant.

### **Athletic Apollo Yogis:**

Congratulations to our Apollo yogis who have recently competed in athletic endurance events, including:

- **Brian Ellwood** completed his fourth Kepler Challenge, a 60km mountain run.
- **Ben van Opzeeland, Emma van Opzeeland, Georgie Kennedy** and **Lydia Kennedy** competed in the Wanaka Challenge Half-Ironman. **Lydia**, in her first ever Half-Ironman, smashed the course record for the swim. She says that keeping up her Apollo Power Yoga practice throughout her gruelling training for the event kept her strong, mobile and focussed during the race.
- **Jen Powell** and **Michael Smith** competed in Le Race, cycling from Christchurch to Akaroa.
- The **Christ's College Rowing Teams** who have recently been practicing with our 6:15am classes are currently competing in the Maadi Cup.

And it's great to see talented multi-sporter **Andrea Murray** dropping into Apollo for a practice when she was visiting from Wanaka. Andrea holds the women's one-day course record for the Coast to Coast, and recently competed in the Godzone Adventure Race. Godzone is a non-stop 7 day race around the Lake Wanaka region, involving mountaineering, hiking, kayaking and mountain-

biking. Andrea's team, which included her husband, **Keith Murray**, and their 2 sons, placed 8<sup>th</sup> out of over 50 teams competing. Andrea's training and fitness regime includes **5 yoga practices per week**.

### **Yogurt for Yogis:**

Have you tried **Cyclops Organic Yogurt**? It's delicious, organic, has very little added sugar, and contains no gelatine. Even though it's low in fat, it's also a very thick and creamy Greek style of yogurt, so very filling. A little goes a long way! Our amazing yogi **Jim Small** is the creative genius behind this excellent food product. If you haven't already tried it, do it now.

Namaste

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