



July 2014

APOLLO POWER YOGA'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

PARTY! Join with us to celebrate the completion of our first year of operation with a **MID-WINTER BEACH PARTY** in the studio on **SUNDAY 27 JULY** from **1PM until 4PM**. **SAM HUNT** will perform a selection of his wonderful poems, and refreshments will be provided. Bring a blanket or a deck chair and celebrate with us.



Places are limited so RSVP by emailing margo@apollopoweryoga.co.nz, or let us know when you're next in the studio.

Workshops:

Walk the Path of Yoga in Your Life: This day-long workshop will run from **9am to 5pm on Sunday 10 August**. This day will be about yoga as a way of being – not just what occurs on a mat. When you step off your mat you continue to live your yoga. Learn to live powerfully and authentically as we meditate together, practice asana together, and engage in discussion and fun activities together.

Venue: Apollo Power Yoga Studio, 107 Hereford Street.

Cost: \$100.00 incl. GST (half price for annual members).

Booking is essential and places are limited so contact Hamish by email, hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz, by telephone, 021 0551884, or drop in at the studio to book. Your place will be confirmed upon payment.

Free the Body Mind on 14 September will be led by a visiting instructor named Janine Gaddie, a bodymind worker and therapist who takes workshops guiding students into mindbody connection and from that point into release and expansion. Watch this space for further details next month.

Asana Spotlight: Last month's magazine started a series of articles on back bends and we discussed some spinal anatomy and back bending mechanics. Keep those matters in mind as you come to this month's focus pose, **Salabhasana** (Locust).

- Begin lying flat on your front side. Bring your palms flat to the floor beneath your shoulders with your fingers pointing forward and your elbows pointing to the sky. Then slide your hands back alongside your body until they are beside your waist. The heel of your hands should be lifting slightly from the floor. Look to the picture and see how this creates a chaturanga dandasana-like set to the arms.

- With an inhalation peel the front side of your torso up from the floor. There is no need to tilt your head back – just focus on lifting as much of your torso from your throat to your navel up from the floor as you can.
- Keep your chin drawn inwards towards your throat (*jalandhara bandha*) with your neck long and in line with the rest of your spine
- Engage your quadriceps at the front of your thighs and turn your inner thighs inwards and upwards towards the sky. Reach backwards through the soles of your feet then begin to lift your legs from the floor.
- Your hands, unlike in cobra, can be active here. Rather than pressing downwards, feel as if your fingers are pushing backwards on your mat.
- Feel your shoulder blades drawing towards one another, their inner edges pressing your thoracic spine forward.
- The previous two cues point to critical actions of reaching backwards and forwards in this pose. The forward and backward energy, harnessed by the engagement of the back side of your body creates lift.
- Let the front side of your torso broaden and lengthen with a sensation of leading forwards with your heart centre as you press backwards with your hands. As the whole anterior side of your body lengthens and lifts you feel a beautiful sensation of flight in this pose.
- The degree of back bend here is not great compared with some others but, like

cobra, there is a lot of strengthening to the spinal erectors occurring in this pose.

- To come down, exhale and gently ease your way to the floor. Avoid collapsing out of this and any other pose.
- There are many different variations of locust pose. Other variations may call for your hands to be laced behind your back or be held in a cactus-like position out from your shoulders and there are numerous other variations. The key to all is to work strong contractions through the back side of the body.
- May people experience discomfort as the front points of their hips press against the floor in this and other prone back bends. Feel free to pad your hips by doubling up your mat or placing a towel beneath your hips for extra padding.
- If locust bothers your lower back, try practicing it with just one leg lifted at a time.



Take about five breaths in locust and when you lower to the floor allow yourself to melt into the floor, no matter how hard it is, loving the relaxation of your body to the earth. Five breaths in a pose such as locust may seem a long time when you go into it but the pose is over soon enough. Be calm, be in your breath and you will realise how strong you actually are.

Chakra Theory: The seventh chakra is *Sahasrara* – the crown chakra. This chakra

concerns the mind and its interplay with the infinite, with spirit, with the divine.

In Tantric philosophy the crown chakra is the final place at which we acquire understanding and ultimate liberation. There are some differences between Tantric and yogic philosophy as to the role of the senses in this process. In yogic philosophy (e.g. *The Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali and the *Bhagavad Gita*) this enlightenment is achieved through extreme asceticism and disconnection from the senses (*pratayahara*). In Tantric philosophy the senses are regarded as a gateway to awakened consciousness.

In both, however, liberation from the corporeal and mundane is achieved at a high level of mental awareness. There might be seen to be three levels of consciousness: sub-conscious (your body functioning at essential levels without the need for thought), conscious (our thought processes over which we have control), and the super-conscious (a higher level of awareness of the spiritual, the divine, the interconnectedness of all things beyond borders of time and space). In the modern Western world we are all aware of the sub-conscious and the conscious. That ought not to discount the possibility of the super-conscious.

The element of the crown chakra is thought. Thought is the process by which we know things. Thought is a tool at the disposal of our awareness. If we are able to release our thoughts from the tyranny of the mundane and guide our thoughts with full awareness and presence then we can access a dimension that transcends all physical boundaries of time and space. In *Wheels of Life* Dr. Anodea Judith puts it this way:

What, then, is "higher" consciousness? Higher consciousness is the awareness of a higher or deeper order – one that is more inclusive. Higher consciousness is sometimes called cosmic consciousness, and refers to an awareness of a cosmic or celestial order.

Where the lower chakras are full of millions of bits of information about the physical world and its cycles of cause and effect, cosmic consciousness reaches far into the galaxies and beyond, opening to the awareness of unifying truths. It is the perception of meta-patterns, overarching organisational principles of our cosmic ordering system. From this place we can descend again to lesser orders with an innate understanding of their structure and function as subsets of these meta-patterns.

Consciousness in the crown chakra can be of two types depending upon the direction of our awareness. One is cognitive consciousness where awareness is directed to finite things at a tangible level. We think, reason, learn, remember, calculate and direct actions. The awareness here is focussed and narrowed. The other type is transcendent consciousness. Here, awareness moves away from our individual selves, disengages from logical thought patterns and comes to sense all things in the universe at once – contemplation of the infinite.

Thus, the crown chakra may be seen as an exchange point where the infinite and divine meet and interrelate with the finite and tangible elements of our everyday existence. Through transcendent consciousness we liberate ourselves from the affliction of needing aspects of our everyday lives (the possession of things, the gratification of our senses, the play of our emotions) and experience emptiness of mind. That creates the potential for immanence – the awareness of the infinite within us. We derive enlightenment from our higher state of awareness and are able to manifest that enlightenment in our way of being as that enlightenment is drawn back down through the other chakras.

The crown chakra is represented by 100-petalled lotus in the colour violet. As we came up through the chakras the number of petals on the lotus symbol has increased.

Sometimes there is a finite number of petals attributed to this chakra but at other times it is said to have 1000 and in certain cultures numbers ending with repeated zeroes are used to represent that which is infinite.



The deities of the crown chakra are the lord Shiva and the rising Shakti.

We have, in previous editions of this magazine identified foods associated with others of the chakras. The crown chakra, however, is associated with fasting. The exercises for the crown chakra are not physical ones but mental exercises of meditation. Meditation begins with centring one's mind to one point. As the Yoga Sutras assert, there is *dharana* (concentration), then *dhyana* (meditation) and finally *samadhi* (enlightened consciousness).

One meditative exercise is to follow your thoughts. Sit quietly and watch your thoughts. Choose one from the thought stream and consider what thoughts came before it and what its origin may be. Follow it to its source. Follow that to its source. Eventually you will reach a notion, an idea or belief for which there is no further apparent origin. Then come back to the thought stream, choose another thought and complete the same process for that thought. See whether and, if so, how many, thoughts return to the same origin. Then begin watching the

thought stream drift by without connecting or immersing yourself in any one thought. Let the stream drift by until it dwindles in volume and turbulence and rest there.

The pituitary gland is associated with the crown chakra. This gland has an overall role in producing or stimulating elsewhere the production of hormones for important uses throughout the body. Growth, sexual function, aspects of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding are regulated by this gland. Blood pressure is balanced with hormones from the pituitary as are water levels in the body, temperature, pain and metabolic function. This complex, three parted gland, closely related with the hypothalamus, is a fundamental aspect of our bodily operation.

NUTRITION – SPROUTS

Sprouted foods are a great thing to incorporate into your daily nutrition. As Brendon Brazier describes in his book, **Thrive**, sprouts are a complete, balanced form of one-step nutrition, rich in enzymes, and plentiful in all three food components: simple carbohydrate, amino acids, and fatty acids.

In sprouted foods, the digestion process has already begun – the process of sprouting converts the complex carbohydrates in the food into simple carbohydrates, the protein into usable amino acids, and the fat into fatty acids. This means that our bodies don't have to produce enzymes to carry out that breaking down process, and can utilise these nutrients immediately. As we get older, our bodies' ability to produce enzymes decreases, so incorporating this type of "pre-digested" food into our nutrition is especially beneficial.

Sprouts can be purchased, but it's easy and far less expensive to grow your own sprouts. You can use a pie-tin with a few layers of paper towels in the bottom, and a layer of seeds in between the paper towels. You just need to

add water a few times a day to keep the sprouts damp (but not drowning!). You can also buy a sprouter, which is a stack of plastic trays which allow water to be periodically drained through the sprouting seeds. Oderings Nurseries has stocked these in the past, and will hopefully have them back on the shelves soon.

There are many different types of seeds that make good sprouts, such as lentils, mung

beans, and peas. It takes a few days from the time you start the sprouts until they're ready to eat, so it's good to have several batches on the go, at different stages of maturity.

Namaste

Hamish and Margo

©Hamish Kenworthy and Margo Perpick 2014

