



kaadaa!

Svaroopa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

Volume 1 No 4

April 30, 2013

Editorials By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

Master Yoga Foundation

You Do Yoga

Making time for yoga, time to take care of yourself, can be one of the hardest parts of the practice! Whether it's your home practice, attending a yoga class or even finding a weekend or week for a YogImmersion — life is so busy! You have to shoehorn the yoga in there. When you do, the difference is wonderfully obvious. When you don't, the difference is uncomfortably obvious, to you and to everyone around you.

While a *Svaroopa*® yoga class begins with Shavasana, many skip this step in their personal practice. That's because life is about "doing." When you manage to carve out 20 minutes or even an hour for yoga, you want to do as much as you can in that time! Do include Shavasana at the end; you'd be crazy to leave it out. Your

continued on page 2

Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

Yoga Does You

It was always about the stillness. When I first learned yoga poses, I could feel the changes happening while we were staying in the pose, not during the moving in or moving out. It worked when we stopped the "doing." Now I know that's the way life works, too.

Spring catalogs show beautiful garden furniture promising you a sweet future: that hammock or chaise lounge will lure you outside so you can give over to "undoing." Something happens there, something indescribable. Yoga describes it. Yoga specializes in it.

I discovered this secret part of yoga when I found my Guru. Just sitting in His presence did something to me, something I couldn't do

continued on page 2

Tadaa!

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table of contents

You Do Yoga

by Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati 1

Yoga Does You

by Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati 1

Enliven & Advance

by Marlene Gast 3

Trainer Profile: Polly DiBella

by Marlene Gast 4

More Layers to It

by Tanmayee (Theresa) Reynolds 4

Reawakening Report

by Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati 5

Making a Difference

by Bob Nogue 6

The Beauty of the Audios

By Savitri (Louise) Harkema 6

Seva: The Practice of Selfless Service

by David Falbaum 7

Nothing Exists, Especially In Varanasi, That Is Not Shiva

by Saguna Goss 8

Dipping In

by Marlene Gast 9

At the Kumbha Mela

by Sheynapurna (Sandy) Peace 10

The Trip I Didn't Take to India

by Yogeshwari Fountain 11

Our Conference is Coming!

by Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati 12

Svaroopa® Calendar

Upcoming Master Yoga & Ashram events 13

Editorials *continued from page 1*

Master Yoga Foundation

breathing practice and poses have prepared you for Shavasana, with or without a Guided Awareness, usually a deep, delicious, inner experience. This is the purpose of the breathing and poses — you are “doing” so that you are prepared for the “undoing.”

In Shavasana, you get “undone.” Lots of people go to the Caribbean in mid-winter so they can lie on a pink sand beach and get “undone.” It takes three days to settle into your vacation and then sometimes it’s already time to return home. But Shavasana gives you this in a few minutes. Well, your first Shavasana, before breathing and poses, wouldn’t have done it for you; the breathing and poses prepared you.

So many poses, so little time! I have written over 3,000 pages of pose handouts for teachers as there are so many things you can do with your body. The physical science of Svaroopa® yoga is profound, based on principles modern medicine has not yet discovered. The proof is in the results you get when you do more yoga. It’s reliable. It’s predictable. The “doing” prepares you to be “undone.”

Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

to myself. All my “doing” made me farther and farther away from the indefinable something that He gave me. “Doing” always does that, makes you busier, crazier, even speedy on the inside. You become less and less present. Life seems to be about what you get done or what other people think of you; thus you must go faster and try harder. But what if life was really about you being You? What if...

So I learned to sit. I sat in my Guru’s presence, which made me more present, not merely present to Him but present to me. I became me. All the “doing” had to be “undone.” His presence bathed me in Grace, like the sun bathes my cats in sunlight. You have to stop all the “doing” to find this yoga.

Once you’ve found the “undoing,” you’ll discover how “doing” arises out of stillness. I first found this while meditating as Kundalini moved me into yoga poses — the “doing” of poses arising from the “undoing” of meditation. Then my Baba gave me texts to chant, sutras to memorize and lots of seva to do. I’m still serving Him. Now all the “doing” is the “undoing.” It’s all yoga.

Enliven & Advance

By Marlene Gast

During the first weekend in March, participants in the “Enliven & Advance: Level 1” EYTS course discovered it is a great way to refresh skills in alignment and adjustments for Svaroopa® yoga’s primary spinal openers, and, it turns out, so much more...

Residing in Corpus Christi TX, Mary Carpenter has completed YTT Levels 1 & 2, and was looking forward to “Enliven & Advance — Level 1” for several reasons. Mary says she has benefited from EYTS courses before as a great way to be in Current Standing with Continuing Education requirements; she wanted a refresher on pose alignments; and she enjoys repeating courses, ever since she read Swami Nirmalananda’s teaching article on the value of repetition in *Tadaa!* a few years ago. With the closest *Svaroopa*® yoga classes an eight-hour drive away, Mary was also eager to be a student for the weekend immersion.

Mary says, “I was amazed again at the subtlety of *Svaroopa*® yoga. Just a hint of support can give a huge release. What astounds me is that we spent a day on Alternate Leg and Alternate Leg-diagonal, experiencing layers and layers of depth in my own opening as well as gathering new information and experience with the poses. I hadn’t thought there was so much to learn in just those two poses.”

Mary’s wishes to be just a student were abundantly fulfilled. “It was a delight to be a real student in a regular class,” she says. “We had a bunch of classes in which we could just be the student. As we were in one of these classes, I realized the pose could support me rather than me working in the pose. In the inner space that opened from not efforting, and releasing the desire to get any kind of effect, I experienced the pose as a kind of cocoon to nurture and support me. The three days in Exton felt more like a spa treatment than a training class. It was a great sweetness that provided a space of openness for the pose to grow inside you!”

Now at home and teaching again, Mary is spreading the benefits she received to her students. “I taught a class in which a student got new releases from the Leg Lean adjustment in Alternate Leg,” reports Mary. “The student felt a new awareness in her tailbone area, even though she has been doing yoga a long time. And she got a new release in Lunge — a sacrum release. Feeling more confident now in giving the Ribcage Press in JP, I find my students are getting more ribcage release.”

Kathy Gardner, who teaches in the central North Carolina town of Huntersville, says that “Enliven & Advance — Level 1” was like a retreat. As a relatively small group, we could

ask questions, and get a sense of where we are with Level 1 poses. Vidyadevi skillfully and comfortably brought us back from drift without making us feel judged or criticized.”

“The first day, Vidyadevi asked, ‘Why are you here?’ and I answered, ‘To be fed.’ I felt like a dried-out sponge. Then the tailbone poses opened things up for me. Those poses were very freeing. Not only was there an awesome physical opening, but there was also the immersion in community. It was so nice to be a student again and to be with other *Svaroopis*.”

Joe Yezzi, who recently completed YTT Level 4 and DTS, teaches in Binghamton NY. Like Kathy Gardner, Joe feels that the immersion in a community of *Svaroopis* was one of the delights of the “Enliven & Advance” course. He says, “Going back to Master Yoga, back to the Exton studio and being with other *Svaroopa*® yoga teachers, including Teacher Trainer Vidyadevi with Rukmini Abbruzzi who assisted, was so wonderful. There was such a sense of Oneness. We were all there for one reason – to deepen our openings, and experience such a high energy level.”

“The course was more than I expected,” continues Joe. “In terms of the actual teacher training fact, it helped me get back on track. Regarding drift, I found I wasn’t that far out, but neither was I as on target as I had thought with alignments. Yes, drift happens, and the course brought me home.”

“It was just wonderful yet over too quickly,” says Joe. “We all need to do Continuing Education to stay in Current Standing for our certifications. But with this course I felt that meeting a Continuing Education requirement was just a side benefit. The course reinforced my knowing that I was meant to be a *Svaroopa*® yoga teacher. *Svaroopa*® yoga is powerful, very powerful — and so easy, so simple — just softening, less is more.”

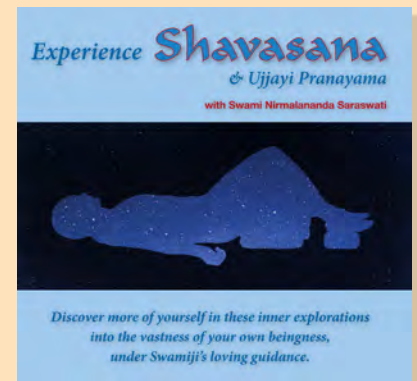
Jim Totin teaches in rural Vermont. Having completed YTT Level 1 in April 2012, Jim took “Enliven & Advance” to stay current — and also found that the course delivered so much more than expected. Jim describes the course as “a powerful, deepening experience,” and is pleased to have learned valuable new adjustments and alignments such as the Side Sacrum Press for Pigeon and Kurmasana against the

wall. Jim says, “I was able to feel down into my sit bones. On the first day, after the tailbone opening, I felt my sacrum for the first time.”

Jim describes his fellow students as “a great group” and goes on to say, “Vidyadevi is so able to help out in so many ways. It’s really a pleasure to take a class from Vidyadevi. Whatever comes up, she knows how to answer and what to do; I am confident that she will have an answer for anything. This goes for Karobi, too, though she was not teaching in this course. And I am always in awe of Swamiji pulling all of this together; it’s unbelievable — I tell people this is a real gift from God. I can’t imagine life without it, and wouldn’t want to imagine where I would be without this yoga.”

Experience Shavasana

Discover more of yourself in these inner explorations into the vastness of your own beingness, under Swamiji’s loving guidance. The sound of her voice will guide you into a deeper experience, called “The Shavasana Experience.”



*Enjoy Guided Awareness & Ujjayi Pranayama, the Shavasana experience that begins every *Svaroopa*® yoga class, with or without tamboura. Dive in deeper with Swamiji’s Long Guided Awareness, which provides you a more detailed exploration and full half-hour of Shavasana that is part of the Foundations of *Svaroopa*® yoga course. Tracks also include the purpose of Shavasana as a yoga practice and easy propping instructions.*

To order this CD [click here](#)

TRAINER PROFILE

Polly DiBella

By Marlene Gast

Polly DiBella was introduced to *Svaroopa*® yoga at a yoga conference where Swami Nirmalananda (then Rama Berch) was teaching a workshop. After taking the workshop, some 16 years ago, she found Sarita-Linda Rocco's studio in Reading PA. Polly took the first East Coast *Svaroopa*® Yoga Immersion there with Swami Nirmalananda. Yoga had always been Polly's path; she was already teaching yoga full time. Compelled by her experience of *Svaroopa*® yoga, Polly began taking classes in Reading, even though it required a 45-minute drive each way.



Polly DiBella

Photo courtesy of Master Yoga

Polly recalls, "When I first discovered this practice and did the Magic 4 consistently, dramatic changes took place in my body. After about six weeks, the practice removed chronic neck and shoulder pain, as well as chronic hip pain which had developed after many years of basic hatha yoga. Before discovering *Svaroopa*® yoga, my hip pain had been worsening. If I sat in a movie for two hours, I would have to stand up very, very slowly before I could walk out of the theatre. I had not been told that doing the Magic 4 would eliminate pain, so I was very surprised when the pain left.

"I also liked how the yoga literally pulled me inward. It captivated me. The increased range of motion, ease of movement in my shoulders and the significant change in my hip propelled me into Teacher Training, even though I had been teaching in another style for 12 years."

Polly was also inspired by what she calls the "second tier" of experience with *Svaroopa*® yoga — the component of meditation. She explains, "I have been on a personal growth quest for 40 years and more. After 20 years of experience with other styles of yoga and meditation, I found that *Svaroopa*® yoga meditation gave me new levels of ease within myself, new ease in being who I am and knowing myself. Although yoga has always been my primary path, I credit *Svaroopa*® yoga with creating change in my access to Consciousness as well as change in my teaching and family relationships — in fact every dimension of myself and my life. That's me as a Svaroopi!

"As a Teacher Trainer for Master Yoga now, involved in Foundations and YTT Level 1, as well as Foundations Review, my job is easy because the programs are so well designed. In Trainings, I relish the concentrated block of time with students who are already committed to *Svaroopa*® yoga as their path or are very receptive to it. It is a joy to share in their growth and their new understandings. The opening of their bodies, minds and hearts is really inspiring. I give the credit to *Svaroopa*® yoga and to the way the programs are designed and put together.

"Another profound joy as a Teacher Trainer is working with the other Teacher Trainers and program assistants. It's a supportive community that connects me at another level. Being a part of the Master Yoga Teacher Trainer community is an experience that I deeply value."

More Layers to It

By Tanmayee (Theresa) Reynolds

When I look at it from the outside, it's easy to see how seva is an essential part of keeping both of our *Svaroopa*® organizations running smoothly. Yet it is so much more.

While seva is a wonderful way to volunteer your time and talents, for the purpose of helping a person, a project or an organization as a whole, it becomes an eye-opening experience of your Self. Regardless of the work you offer to do, you can gain subtle and profound awarenesses.

Like the Guided Awareness in Shavasana, seva works from the outside-inward. You initially hear of a need, offer your service to it and begin the work. Then, like water being absorbed into a sponge, Grace starts to seep in. You open yourself to soak up a bit more, and sometimes discover you are receiving more than you ever thought possible.

Like octopus tentacles, seva reaches out and touches on a multitude of issues you didn't even realize you needed to look at in your life.

You might find yourself on a project, doing something you never had an interest in or talent for. Then you discover that this builds your self-confidence in a way that encourages you to try other new things, things you had previously thought you couldn't do.

Perhaps you are given a task but after a while you realize that you just don't enjoy it. You don't want to back out of your commitment, so you stick with it for a while longer. And then you discover that your seva is closely related to your work or home life in some way and find a whole new way of being present in both.

It could be that you gain a new awareness, that as much as you like to help others, it's maybe too much. You say yes to too many things and end up overcommitted. Then you learn how to set your priorities, and include yourself (and Your Self) on the list.

Seva creates clarity, paving the way for you to know what's important to you and what's not. You begin to recognize where you feel disconnected from Source, and then you realize you are in the moment when you know there is no separation. You discover how your yoga can be taken into your life in a way that you'd never find, except through seva - experiences of selfless service to others.

Your seva will serve as a doorway, opening a new path for you, a path that clears out the brambles and brush of your "stuff." This deepens your journey on the way to knowing your Self, as you become saturated in the Grace that you are becoming more able to absorb.

In your willingness to serve, you receive gifts that go far beyond your original intentions. You see, it's not just about your being willing or able to give. It goes much deeper than that. Over time, you discover that the true gift is found in being given the opportunity to serve. Within that opportunity, a multitude of blessings arise that allow you to more fully know your own Self.

When I look at it from the outside, it's easy to see how seva is an essential part of keeping both of our *Svaroopa*® organizations running smoothly. Yet it is so much more.

Reawakening Report

By Swami Nirmalananda

Last October the Board told me they voted to close Master Yoga. My first thought was “OK.” In that simple word was a lifetime of yoga. I’d given it all away so many times — first I gave my local classes to the teachers I’d trained; then my clients went to the therapists. Then I wrote up all my secrets in the Advanced Teacher Training handouts; now, hundreds of teachers have them and use them every day.

So I was informed Master Yoga was closing. OK. My second thought was that many yogis would still want training. They’d certainly come to me, what then? Might I have to build a whole new Teacher Training organization from scratch? Ugh! Or maybe I could just say no... But how can I say no to someone who wants to know svarooopa, and wants to share it? I knew I couldn’t turn them away; it’s like asking the sun to stop shining.

That’s why I offered to lead Master Yoga out of the crisis. It was for you. I’ve been working hard at that task for the last six months. I am delighted to say the crisis is over.

Master Yoga’s financial condition is stable, with income covering our costs. If class tuitions as well as your donations continue at the current rate, we’ll generate a small surplus by year end, about 5%. This will begin rebuilding needed operational reserves. I do want you to know we hold all your course prepayments in a separate bank account, not using them for operations until you attend your program. Those funds were never at risk.

What’s made the difference? We still teach the same courses, with the same primary Teacher Trainers. We are supported by administrative staff who’ve served for 5 or 10 years or more. We are in the same location, with a smaller footprint, but still in the same place.

The difference is the focus. Plus it’s the “Sakti” (pronounced Shakti — meaning energy). Think of them together, like a garden hose, with the “Sakti” streaming through like water. The gardener decides where to direct the flow; that’s the focus. What I’ve done is dial up the “Sakti” and turn the focus to you, the yogis who want to do more yoga. Most of our Reawakening Initiatives are new ways of working with what we already have, turning our focus to using it all to give you more.

For the first time, I’ve created a full-year contemplation theme, Alignment with Grace, which is also tied into our October conference. We’ll reap the fruits of the year of teachings in that pivotal event.

SATYA dues now support SATYA members’ continuing studies, which has created our new Expanded Scholarship.

Tadaa! was birthed as a monthly online magazine expressing the whole of the Svarooopa® Sciences. Sevites and staff bring together the articles already being written, adding thematic planning as well as many layers of deadlines, editing, proofreading and graphics — it’s a lot!

In addition to adding more programs and dates in Exton, Vidyadevi and Karobi are adding out-of-town Weekend Workshops to their teaching year, along with our new Weekend Workshop Leaders. Meanwhile I’m continuing to work with our Foundations Trainers, who travel to teach in your home town.

Support for teachers is expanded with the return of a Yoga Business course, which I designed as a personalized coaching program. Along with their yoga coaches, we utilize our new Marketing Panel, who also now offer discounted services to SATYA members and are soon beginning a free phone course for members.

Support for Exton students has been expanded through the new meals program, Annapurna Meals, offered by the Ashram. A perfect

collaboration between the two organizations, the gourmet vegetarian meals prepared by Ashram chefs now have two special options: vegan-gluten free and “bland.”

Two more pieces are just coming to fruition. Our new Enrollment System has just gone online, and Sri McNeill will soon be publishing new marketing support for Svarooopa® yoga teachers.

Our seva campaign has attracted many new sevites, volunteering to help in many areas, and I’m enjoying my participation in the process — I meet with Joanna McNeal to assign each person’s seva personally. I make sure there is a yoga in it for the sevite!

Maybe that is the bottom line, that there’s a yoga to it all. The yoga of business, the yoga of seva, the yoga of teaching, the yoga of marketing, the yoga of administration — Master Yoga is all about yoga, not just the poses but the ‘feel’ of it, the mood of it, the deepening of it. That’s the “Sakti”. That’s what I provide. That’s how I serve.

May 17 is our birthday— Master Yoga's turning 21!

Celebrate our coming of age by
following these easy steps:

1. Light some candles on a cake (or muffin)
2. Take a photo with it
3. Sing “Happy Birthday” to Master Yoga
4. Send your photo with your name and location to [Master Yoga](#)
5. Enjoy the worldwide celebration on our special Birthday webpage



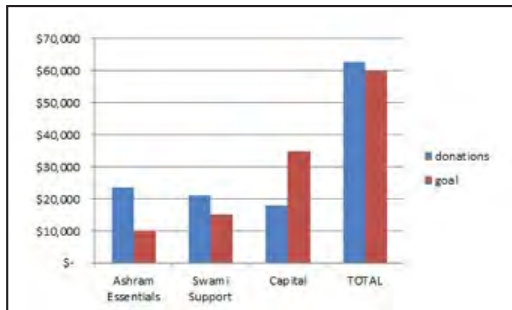
Thank you for 21 blissful years!

Making a Difference

By Bob Nogue, Board Treasurer

In January we launched our 2013 fundraising campaign to support the Ashram. On behalf of Swami and our other Board members, I am pleased to announce our successful campaign results and thank you for your gifts.

Your strong support to Swami shows your tangible appreciation for the benefits you receive from her and from the Ashram programs. Your giving also provides us clear feedback about the aspects of the Ashram that are most important to you.



Our fundraising objectives were:

1. To raise funds for three separate purposes:

- Swami Support** — taking care of Swami's personal needs as well as providing the staffing that enables her to write, lead programs and support our growing community. Goal: \$15,000
- Ashram Essentials** — supporting the numerous free programs that Swami offers to all of us. Goal: \$10,000
- Temple Builder** — funding two capital projects: the completion of a meditation temple in our backyard and the replacement of Ashram furnaces. Goal: \$35,000

2. To elicit and sustain a level of donations proportionate to prior years, both through one-time gifts as well as monthly donations.

3. To increase the amount of monthly donations, so we can better plan for ongoing needs.

Your many and generous donations have yielded great success for the majority of our objectives.

1a & 1b — Swami Support and Ashram Essentials exceeded their goals, through donations and pledges totalling \$ 44,600. This 78% higher than their combined goal of \$25,000

1c — Temple Builder fell short, yielding \$ 18,100 of donations and pledges, reaching 51% of our \$35,000 goal. Your funding makes us able to complete the furnace replacement and begin the Temple Project, with the completion being deferred to next year. We will continue to invite your donations or monthly pledges for this project.

2 — A substantial number of one-time donations totalled more than \$25,000, continuing our multi-year history of being supported by your gifts.

Most of our monthly donors have maintained or increased their monthly pledges, with a growth of 73%, thus continuing to provide approximately \$6,000 per month. This ongoing support is both gratifying and financially significant.

3 — Almost 50 monthly donors are receiving the yajña ash in the Taj Mahal marble boxes, for their new pledges or increase in their ongoing monthly gift. Swamiji ran out of marble boxes and will have to go back to India to buy some more! This is a great increase! This helps Swami and the Board plan Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram's future with a greater sense of confidence and certainty.

You have once again demonstrated your understanding of the "Yoga of Money" as well as how your giving supports Swami so that she can support you in profound ways. Thank you for making a difference.

The Beauty of the Audios

By Savitri (Louise) Harkema

For me, the beauty of the [audio satsangs](#) is that they are recorded. You may have attended a talk or satsang with Swami Nirmalananda or one of the other Svaroopā® teachers and (like me) you have wished those talks were recorded so you could refer back to them, and pick out those aha moments.

One of the reasons I like to attend workshops rather than Teacher Training courses is that I can just listen to the talks. They draw me inward and help me dissolve untrue belief structures which cloud my knowledge of My Self. The teacher training courses are for learning; therefore I need to write down the information. I cannot self-indulge by simply listening and absorbing. However I cannot attend every workshop. The audio satsangs provide a wonderful substitute. They are there for you to listen to over and over again. Words have power!

My personal favorite satsangs are the Shiva Sutra series. Swamiji not only speaks on how these ancient words can be translated and applied to our modern day life but also on how these sutras are interpreted by those on the yogic path as well as the mystical aspects of the sutra. At some point my yoga practice ceased to be a maintenance tool that made my life better; it is now a blueprint for my yogic progress. Swamiji's commentaries on these Shiva Sutras include sources of information from other Great Beings, ancient and modern, that help me map out choices on my path. More than once, what I have heard in the audio satsangs and or read in the sacred texts has fueled my meditations and answered questions that arise.

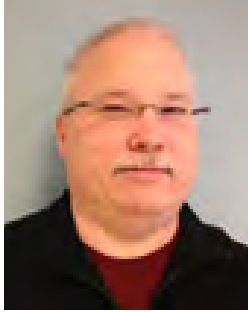
There is a wealth of information in these talks, as well as many ways to integrate them into your yogic path. I include the audio satsangs as part of my morning routine, which begins with japa and meditation, journaling, then seva for the Ashram, transcribing the audio satsangs. I finish this with my yoga poses. Sometimes I listen to a talk while I am doing house work or preparing a meal.

Whether you listen to the audio satsangs one after the other as a way to enhance your yogic experience in the privacy of your own home, or you are finding yourself asking questions and not finding answers, I am sure one of the audio satsang titles will reach out to you and be of benefit. There are titles on how to find Bliss at home or on the road, and titles like **You are Consciousness** (Oct 16 2010) or **What is the Value of Human Birth** (May 5 2011) or **Contagious Bliss**.

The answer, of course, is always to do more yoga or do more japa.

Seva: The Practice of Selfless Service By David Falbaum

I'm grateful for everything that has happened to me since my mouse cursor landed on Nokomis Yoga in Minneapolis MN, and I started my journey into *Svaroopaa*® yoga and myself. Everyone starting with Swamiji all the way



David Falbaum

Photo courtesy of Master Yoga

to our local teachers has given me so much that I needed to express my gratitude in some way. Seva is my way to begin giving back to the people and organizations that have given and keep giving me so much.

That June day in 2012 when I sat at my computer, Googled yoga and found Solveig Corbin's *Svaroopaa*® yoga classes, my back was in pain and I was frustrated with my doctor. I would show him! He was telling me to lose weight and exercise more. I was already exercising two hours per day. I was an exercise junkie!

I know that something very Divine led me to *Svaroopaa*® yoga. Within three weeks of beginning private sessions and classes, I felt my tailbone and Kundalini. With the pain gone, I was able to stop taking prescription narcotics daily, and stop my nightly practice of numbing myself while watching TV, eating junk food, and downing a bottle of wine. Within three weeks, there was simply no desire to do any of that stuff; now I do asana when I come home from work. I'm very happy, and I practice contentment instead of focusing on what is not right. Most of my practice now is internal. My whole affect, approach, and the way I carry myself have changed. My mother-in-law, among other people, told me I act different, I walk different, I look different.

When I started having so many changes, I emailed Swamiji and she answered me. I figured, why not ask the expert — the Guru? There's a true relationship with Swamiji; she is not remote and inaccessible. The changes happened so fast. I never expected this. I went to *Svaroopaa*® yoga for pain — I knew nothing about yoga, Kashmiri Shaivism or Gurus. It still astonishes me that I have been able to accept everything so quickly. There are no struggles; I just assimilated it all into myself.

After four weeks, my local teacher Solveig Corbin told me that she knew I would be a teacher. At her suggestion I took Foundations in October, signing up just six weeks after I began *Svaroopaa*® yoga. I will take YTT Level 1 in April.

Given this life-changing transformation, I knew I wanted to give back to Master Yoga and to the Ashram. I sent an email: It said I want to help. So I learned about seva after the fact, and this practice, too, is transformative.

As a Research Chemist, I am mainly involved in project management, which is a job employing a range of skills. For seva, I started with folding envelopes and sending out the thank you notes to students from Teacher Trainers and Weekend Workshop Leaders. Then I began working with Andrea Wasserman to get course announcements into Master Yoga's "Spotlight Emails." After that I got involved in a demographics research project for Master Yoga, including obtaining media packages, to figure out where best to place ads. Now I am training to back up Student Services Administrator Cheryl Davis for website maintenance. On the Ashram side I do calendar checking and serve on the sound editing team for posting Swamiji's Satsangs on line.

All the stuff I used to do is gone. Now everything I do is *Svaroopaa*® Sciences practices, including teaching classes and offering seva. Thankfully, I have no time to think!

The best example of how seva is working for me comes from a day when I found myself in a bad mood at work. So I decided to spend 20 minutes on a "Spotlight Email," and the bad mood went away. When I do seva, even if I'm not in a bad mood, I get upliftment. Yet I do it to serve Swamiji and give back to Master Yoga.

The more you put in, the more you get out of it. It's the Grace. This is a very interesting path! I was taking narcotics every day, gobbling them down, coming home from work, exercising two hours, walking the dog, drinking and watching TV. I was miserable. Then everything changed in three weeks. Seva is the way to give back, which I am compelled to do. Yet the seva gives me so much more!

When you offer seva, we place you in a task that matches your skills and interests as well as your available time. For this purpose, we ask you to complete a Skills Survey so we can do the "matchmaking." Every seva opportunity and sevite placement is personally reviewed by Swami Nirmalananda, who oversees the seva programs for both our organizations, specifically for the purpose of insuring that the seva is for the benefit of the sevite. At the same time, your offering provides valuable support for our not-for-profit organizations. Thank you.

To offer seva for Master Yoga, contact Joanna at seva@masteryoga.org or fill out the [MYF Skills Survey](#)

To offer seva for *Svaroopaa*® Vidya Ashram, contact Devapriya at seva@svaroopavidya.org or fill out the [SVA Skills Survey](#)



Nothing Exists, Especially In Varanasi, That Is Not Shiva

By Saguna Goss



Boating on the Ganga in Varanasi

It is my last full day in Varanasi and I am walking along Ganga's ghats (riverbank steps) and I remember that I've been asked to write an article about my experience in Varanasi. I thought to myself, "How do you explain the place and experience that is Varanasi?" And the first thought that came to mind is that there is no where you can look in Varanasi and not see Shiva. In Varanasi, seeing that everything is Shiva is so easy!

So where did we see Shiva in Varanasi? When talking about Varanasi one must start with Ganga! On our way into Varanasi, after a long ride through dense traffic, Swamiji led us through the narrow streets as we walked the last few blocks to the B&B. As Swamiji passed an opening in the buildings she stopped, put her hands in anjali mudra and bowed her head — it was our first sighting of Ganga in Varanasi!

I didn't think much of it as I followed suit. After all, we had seen her back in Allahabad, only three hours earlier, and we had been basking in her glory for a week already. But as I came up to the opening and bowed my head I knew right away that Ganga in Varanasi was special. To me, there in Varanasi, she truly felt like the mother of the earth as a whole and also a mother to every living thing on earth. In some way she seems more majestic than at Allahabad (if that's even possible) and more grounded, embodied in her form (svaroop!) and grounding!

We continued our worship of Ganga the first evening in Varanasi and took a boat ride on Her. As I got on the boat I immediately felt like I was a baby being cuddled and nurtured in my mother's arms. I felt like I was being held by the very force that brought this world into existence. The lines between her and me were blurring — I was one with Ganga.

We timed our boat ride so that we could watch the evening arati (ceremony) to Ganga at the main ghat. Of the countless aratis we experienced in India, there is no arati like the Ganga arati! The 12 Brahmins wave countless things to Ganga including incense, multi-tier arati lamps, large cauldrons of flames, clouds of smoking incense, peacock feathers and yak tail whisks, and I've probably missed a few. For each stage they start by kneeling down on one knee and moving the offering in a circle, facing Ganga. They then stand

up and proceed to perform the arati in all four directions — South, West, North and East — since Ganga is everywhere, Swamiji explained to us!

My favorite part of the arati is when the priests then take a cloth and wipe the brow of Ganga — "She's hot from all the flames and needs cooling down," Swamiji described. The Brahmins do it with such love and care it touches me deeply. My heart and tailbone chakras open... and open and open and open. I feel like they are discs the size of vinyl records in my body. Who knew the openings could be so much! I am changed forever by Ganga.

And if Ganga was the only thing in Varanasi, that would be more than enough — I would be back in a heart beat. But even when you look away from the Ganga all you see in Varanasi is Shiva. The incredibly powerful large temples, the energetically powerful cremation ghats, the small shiva lingam temples nestled into every nook and cranny. If there is a square foot that is not being utilized for street or a store then there's a temple there! Shiva is also so easy to see in all the lovers of God including the countless swamis, sadhus (holy men), aghoris (naked holy men) and pilgrims bathing in the Ganga. And there's more! There is no where in Varanasi that there is not Shiva... and it all comes from Ganga!



Temples large and small abound in Varanasi

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Dipping In As told by Pam Church & Michele Gordon to Marlene Gast

Chanting and meditation in Ganeshpuri, where the energy of Nityananda permeates everything and everybody, gave us a deep experience of the Self. We also benefited from Swamiji's experience and knowledge of this place of Gurus. As visitors we were humbled by the people in this small cluster of villages. Just watching them manifest their love and lifelong devotion to God filled up a well within us that had been thirsting for lifetimes. Being there was so rich — Ganeshpuri's sacred environment made it so much easier to connect into That within.

Fresh from that deeply profound experience and inward opening, we arrived at the Himalayan Institute campus in Allahabad, two miles from the Kumbha Mela's river junction. The Sangham is the actual meeting place of the three rivers, a divine confluence of three sacred rivers — Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati.

Driving through villages toward our destination, we did not know what to expect until we rolled into the Himalayan Institute's gated campus. It offered five-star camping with most amenities, beautifully gardened, groomed and maintained. You could tell it took a lot of work to get it up and running, plus we were informed that all the temporary structures will be donated to local farmers. The straw will become feed for the cattle in the neighboring village. How recyclable is that!

Swamiji said, "You may be thinking you need to do something here, and are wondering what that may be. Perhaps you should just sit with that awhile. You are here at the sacred Ganga. Experience it. Feel it. If you give yourself time, you may discover what it is you are absorbing of this experience. Notice how the energy here is different from Ganeshpuri, with sacred music, chanting and the energy of millions going 24 hours per day." Yes, even in bed at night we listened to the millions of other people at the Kumbha Mela chanting. This sound reverberated inside our bodies, and left a pulsation in the space inside our huts. It was calming, not disturbing.

This gathering of 60 million pilgrims took place on the banks and mud flats of the Ganga, which runs shallow at the edges during the winter. The size of this mela, which can be translated as "gathering," "fair" or "carnival," vividly illustrated the meaning of kumbha. Its translation is "container," and some texts say it refers to an "overflowing pitcher." Small groups of Svaroopis traveled by taxi to the mela in the evening, a different experience from those making walking trips into the mela during the day. They gave reports of unique and personal interactions with the sadhus, holy men who offered blessings. Openings came through deep meditations at Ganga's side as well as from Rolf Sovik's evening lectures on the pilgrims and history of the Kumbha Mela. Just to listen to him, beside the Ganga, triggered a

deep state. We also continued Swamiji's English translation of the Guru Gita, begun in Ganeshpuri. We chanted this translation as well as the Sanskrit version each morning and attended Swamiji's satsang every afternoon. Imagine how our immersion into the Self remained ongoing! We had most of the rest of the day to meditate in the grove facing Ganga, or anywhere on the spacious campus.

Our boat trips to the Sangham, with the opportunity to bathe in the sacred waters of Ganga the "Mother" intensified immersion into Consciousness. This experience is the true purpose of the Kumbha Mela pilgrimage. At the Sangham, a flotilla of boats, laden with coconuts, flowers and fruit, held priests performing pujas, with women and men dunking into the water and then changing wet clothes for dry. Some of our party dipped, some sprinkled drops of Ganga water on their heads, while others dipped mala beads and meditation shawls. Even as observers, we were filled, our senses overflowing, as in Nityananda's Samadhi Temple in Ganeshpuri.

Ganga can be all that is needed to experience what others have known for centuries. She is a place of healing, of peace, of beauty. In Ganga, one knows what has been true all along: That Shiva is everywhere and is everything that exists. After spending a long time trying to find devotion and purpose, it becomes clear that She has been in you all this time.

At the Kumbha Mela

By Sheynapurna (Sandy) Peace



Himalayan Institute campus in Allahabad

We arrived at the Himalayan Institute grounds on February 18, following a long early morning bus ride culminating on a crowded road no wider than our bus. Arriving at the Himalayan Institute's beautiful campus we were warmly welcomed and assigned our eco-cottages. We all wandered over to the Ganga (Ganges River), the Mother, the Milky Way brought to earth as a flow of water, a favorite place to sit and meditate.

The meeting point of the rivers is called prayag — the coming together of two visible rivers, the Yamuna and Ganga, plus the underground or mythical Saraswati. Swamiji explains that this prayag also exists in the center of your skull. She explains, "Here you find a spacious and spacey, ethereal and vast quality of consciousness, devoid of any characteristics, the vastness of pure vastness. There is a quality of almost-emptiness



On the way to the meeting point of the Yamuna and Ganga plus the underground or mythical Saraswati

which is not grounded. It's very high, exalted, intoxicating and non-relational. This doesn't have much to do with everyday life or with the forms that Consciousness takes on." Many of us were deeply affected by this vast ethereal spaciousness, some enjoying very deep and long meditations, while becoming quiet inside and deeply involved with Ganga.

The next morning, we took boats to this area where the rivers converge. A few people immersed fully into the water, although both Swami

Nirmalananda and the Himalayan Institute teachers confirmed that simply scooping a palm full of water and sprinkling it on one's head has the same effect as full immersion. Nandini (Nathalie) Mermet-Grandfille said, "The current was fast, but Ganga was only two to four feet deep, with a very big sandbar that was Ganga's spine. She (Ganga) wasn't that cold, but it felt like the chill I get when sinking into Shavasana, having forgotten a blanket. I was so blissed out and utterly happy. This was the bath I'd always sought in every body of water I'd ever been in. It wasn't like she was trying to wash me down stream, but more like she was reaching into my celestial body, my karmic body and washing every layer of my being clear and clean for all eternity. I spent the evening so blissed, and so thankful that Swami had said to be silent till after morning chants the next day."

Barbara McCarthy shared, "The day after my full immersion in Ganga, I was in the shower giving myself what I thought was just an ordinary bucket bath. I'd skipped the day before, as I was in no hurry to wash away the residue of Ganga. (Honestly, do you think that is even a possibility?) As I poured water over my head and felt it rush down and splash to the floor, I realized that this was no ordinary bath today. Maybe I didn't have the honey and milk, but what I did have was all the power of Ganga rushing over me and through me. I was actually having my own



Pilgrims at the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad

personal Abhishek, not just once, but twice, because the water for our shower came from Ganga. It was in that moment that I realized I have never felt so clean.

"What layer did Ganga reach in me that day? All I can respond is, 'Who knows?' What I do know is that a bit of my self (no, a lot of my self) washed away that day in the Ganges, and I am forever grateful to my Guru who brought me to this place to allow my Self to surface and flow freely. Guru Om."

The Trip I Didn't Take to India

By Yogeshwari Fountain

While many of you trekked across India this February, I took a trip of my own: across the landscape of my mind. While some of you made pilgrimages to Nityananda's shrine in the wee hours of the mornings, I sat with my mind's recriminations and regrets: Why wasn't I there with you? How could I have turned down the chance of a "trip of a lifetime?" Last June, during our Shaktipat weekend in Byfield MA, Swamiji invited everyone to join her in the "true land of her birth." I could so identify with that; immediately I knew: "I'm in." Like many of you that chose to travel to India, my heart soared with the thrill of expectation: having time with my guru, with my kula (spiritual family), with my Self, in the grace infused village of Ganeshpuri, with hours and days of unbroken meditation. So what happened?

Swamiji says, "Anytime you're not happy, your mind is messing with you." Fear started bubbling up from an underground current, creating a sinkhole for my mind. It began a relentless justification list, and before I knew it, I'd talked myself out of going. I have to admit, as mundane as it sounds, I allowed my fear of flying non-stop 15 hours and the memory of my first grueling return home from India (3 years ago), to block my bliss and leave me grounded (in fear). I'd convinced myself of the wisdom of sitting this trip out, that is, until the moment the flight left Newark. As soon as the yogis were airborne, I could literally feel my heart wrench. It was like being left at the gate and watching your loved one's plane leave forever.

My logical mind, and several of my yoga buddies, advised me to get over it, and plan for next time. But my heart knew otherwise; I had some work to do, work that might lead me, if not to the ecstatic state the India Yogis were experiencing, at least to a new level of Self-awareness, one I'd like to share with all of you.

For me, there was life "B.Y." (before yoga) and then later, life "A.G." (after guru). Grace has always surrounded and supported me. There was never a time God was not being me, being everyone, but only with the Guru's guidance have I been able to experience this. This comes from being in an intentional relationship with the Guru, with Swami Nirmalananda, which is a way for you to plant yourself in the beam of Grace. There, everything changes.

When everyone left for India, I thought I'd feel relief; instead I felt lost and unmoored, impossibly homesick. Through much soul searching, I realized that Swamiji is The Self, the Divine Shakti, in a physical tangible form, only so that my mind can understand it. This Shakti is not limited to a form; it is also my very own Self. Because I was looking more at the person, I had gotten stuck. The Self is unchanging, immovable, beyond form, continents, time and space. I began, finally, in meditation to ride the Shakti wave, right where I was.

Ultimately, I had to be open to and accept my fearfulness, with compassion and understanding. My lesson was — who I was 3 years ago ("B.G.") is not who I am today. The power of my mantra and the embodied Grace within me would have carried me through any discomfort upon re-entry. I realize this now. I was holding onto my old, small contracted self. This emotional pain however became a gift, an incubus that revealed my own expansive Self to me. The truth is, I wasn't ready for this "trip of a lifetime" or I would have gone. But 45 of you did go, and in some cosmic way I feel you went for me.

In my morning meditation, tears flowed as I rode the Shakti wave of each of you that had said "Yes!" and were there, in India. You were doing for me that which I couldn't do for myself. Grace in action. I could see Kamala, in her colorful sari, fearlessly bounding out into the throngs at the Kumbha Mela. And Shuchi and Dean, adorned in sacred garb and gold, spending hours tending the ceremonial fires, praying and chanting. I could hear the drumming in the early dawn at Ganeshpuri and see Svaroopis walking in the cold air, wrapped in shawls, with flashlights, heading for Nityananda's Abhishek at 4:00 am. Swami described the profound sweetness of those that poured their beloved's ashes into the sacred Ganga, which somehow was for all of us as well.

So I thank each of you that blazed the trail to India this time; your light will shine brighter for all of us. It is with gratitude that I see how the pain of holding onto someone I used to be inhibited the opportunity to become even more fully who I really am: Shiva! Until the next opportunity to travel to India with Swamiji, I will be content to face my fears as they arise, and use them as a doorway to the Self. For there are really only ever two choices: bliss or fear. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Fear comes from the selfish idea of cutting one's self off from the universe."

Roasted Sweet Potato Salad with Chutney Vinaigrette

योगा युक्तमिदं

By Jennifer Saville, Ashram Chef

3 - 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into one inch chunks	1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons olive oil	1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon salt	1 medium garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon cumin	2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon ground ginger	½ cup dried cranberries
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar	1 cup chopped scallions (white & green parts)
2 - 3 tablespoons mango chutney (to taste)	½ cup sliced almonds (toasted)

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet w/parchment paper. Cut the potatoes, then toss them in a bowl with olive oil, salt, cumin and ginger. Spread on baking sheet in an even layer; roast until tender (apx. 30 minutes).

While potatoes are roasting, whisk balsamic, chutney, Dijon, honey, garlic & olive oil to combine.

Let potatoes cool slightly, then toss with the cranberries, scallions and chutney dressing. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle almonds on top. Serve warm or room temperature.

Our Conference Is Coming!

October 4 - 6 2013

By Swami Nirmalananda



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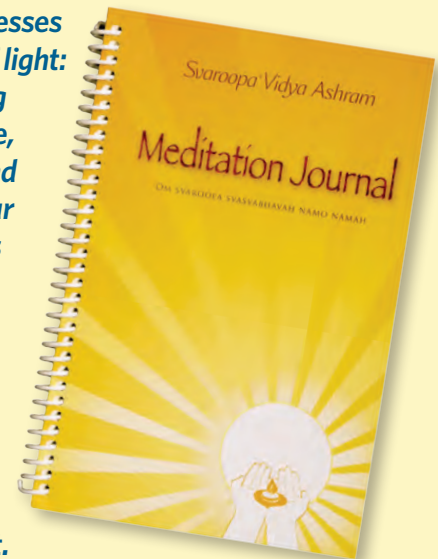
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May 2013		
1	New! Bliss Workshop Half-Day Workshop 2:00 – 5:00 pm	Karobi in Exton PA
1 – 5	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Tish & Devi in Cumberland RI
2 – 8	ATT 402: Deeper Practice	Vidyadevi, Karobi & Swamiji in Exton PA
3	New! ATT 402: DTS program (phone calls begins May 22)	
3-5	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji in Boise ID
4 – 5	Yoga, Life & Breath	Addie in Marlborough MA
4 – 5	Your Heart's Fullest Capacity	Yogeshwari in St Paul MN
7	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
9	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
9	Phone Q&A Satsang 2:30 – 4:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji
12	Swami Sunday 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
13	New! Heart Openers Half-Day Workshop 2:00 – 5:00 pm	Karobi in Exton PA
14	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
14 – 18	EYTS Standing Vinyasa & Variations	Karobi & Vidyadevi in Exton PA
15	Bondage & Freedom Article #3	Swamiji
16	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
19	Swami Sunday 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
21	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
23	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
24	Bondage & Freedom Audio #3	Swamiji
30	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
30	New! Yoga Business 101 (Phone Course begins)	Swamiji & MY Marketing Consultants
31	EYTS Pose Clinic	Karobi in Exton PA
31 – June 2	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
June 2013		
1	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
1	Swamiji's Shaktipat Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
2	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
2	New! Melting Pain Half Day Workshop	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
3 – 9	New Dates! ATT 262: Yoga Therapy-Treating Pain	Vidyadevi & Karobi in Exton PA
4	New! ATT 262: DTS program (phone calls begin June 23)	Vidyadevi & Karobi
4	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
6	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
9	Swami Sunday 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
11	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
12 – 17	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Janaki in Brisbane Australia
13	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
14	Bondage & Freedom Article #4	Swamiji
16 – 21	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Vidyadevi & Polly at Kripalu in Stockbridge MA
16	Swami Sunday 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
17	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Tish & Margo in Antioch IL
18	New Dates! EYTS Foundations Review	Karobi in Exton PA
18	Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
20	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
21	New Dates! EYTS Deceptive Flexibility	Karobi Exton PA
21 – 23	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji in Boston MA

Anjaneyasana

Lunge, variation on Hanuman Pose (Magic 4 Pose #3)

Sanskrit: Anjaneya = son of Anjani (Hanuman)

Concerns & Dangers: If your belly slides off your thigh, you overstretch the ligaments in your hip, destabilizing your joint. Be meticulous about your pose angles. *Substitute Pose:* Half Frog; but don't do another sacrum pose right before or right after Half Frog.

INSTRUCTIONS

To Do Before: Poses for your tailbone & sacrum. Or you can do Lunge at any time on its own, but be meticulous about your pose angles, or the benefits will be fleeting.

Preparation: Kneeling on the floor, place your hands on blocks. Bring your right foot forward & place it ahead of your blocks. Don't lunge forward yet. Your front foot is far enough forward that your front knee is be almost straight. Keep your big toe flat on the floor.

Lean your left palm solidly into your block; if your palm lifts while you do the Belly Move, raise your block taller so your palm will stay flat.

Belly Move: Place your right hand on your belly with your index finger at your navel. Move your index finger & hand down one thumbprint-length & toward the right about one thumbprint. Press your fingers in deeply toward your spine & pull your belly & spine SIDEWAYS over your thigh.

Now slide your right hand up to lay your palm flat on your lowest ribs. Use your hand to move your ribs FORWARD on your thigh, moving your nipple toward your knee. Don't lunge forward yet.

Place your right hand on your block again. Lower or remove your blocks & place your palms flat (on the floor or on blocks). Lean your head forward & down.

Moving In: Lunge slowly forward, going slowly so the right side of your belly stays over your thigh. Once you have moved fully forward, move your front foot forward or back to get your ankle under your knee, so your front shinbone is vertical.

Staying in the Pose: Distribute your weight evenly in both hands. Lean your head deeply forward. Tuck your chin in a little for added length in the back of your neck. Continue with easy breathing. [*Minimum - 45 seconds; Maximum - 2 minutes*]

Moving Out: Leave your head hanging forward & push with your hands & arms to start your movement back. Do your other side

To Do After: If you are using Lunge in your spinal release sequence, do a pose for the vertebrae through your rib cage next. Important — do not do Garbhasana (Child's Pose) right after Lunge. It is very important that you do not fold your hip creases inward so soon.

Anjaneyasana — Lunge, variation on Hanuman Pose (Magic 4 Pose #3)



PROPS

Blocks: using blocks under your hands serves two purposes:

During your Belly Move: It is very important that you use blocks, so you get your belly & ribs on (or over) your thigh. Your blocks must not be too high, or they are wobbly; the middle height is enough for most yogis.

Once you have moved forward into your pose: The blocks give you solid support in both hands & arms, plus they help level your hips in the pose. Remove your blocks if you can place both palms flat on the floor & lean weight into them, or simply use the lowest level of blocks into which you can lean weight.

Knee Cushion: If you have knee pain or discomfort, put your back knee in the hole of a knee cushion (gardening cushion), or stack two cushions & place your knee in the stacked hole.

POSE ANGLES

Front Foot: Your shinbone must be vertical. Lunge fully forward & move your front foot forward or back until your ankle is under your knee so your shinbone is vertical. Do NOT move your back knee.

Hands: Place your wrists under your shoulders. If both palms are not flat, use blocks (or raise your blocks) so both of your palms will go flat. Pivot your hands so your fingers are facing forward & spread wide apart, with your middle fingers parallel to each other.

If you have wrist pain, you can lean your fingers down the front face of your blocks. Or you can use soft fists, placed on the floor or on low blocks. Make sure you have the upper part of your fingers on blocks or on the floor & that the palms of your fists are facing each other. Include your thumbs in your fists.

Back Toes: Your back toenails must lie out flat on the floor.

Ribs over Thigh: Your ribs may touch your thigh; if they don't, they have to be in line over your thigh.

Reliable Spinal Release: The vertebrae through your waist area (W)

Possible Spinal Release: The vertebrae through your lowest ribs, your sacrum, your tailbone

Other Benefits: Lengthens your lumbar spine by providing traction from your back leg through your hip & into your spine; may release tensions through your pelvis. The weight of your head provides traction for your neck & upper spine, providing spinal decompression from your neck downward. Lengthens your torso. Relieves fear.

Movement Type: Lower Spinal Release (LSR); Extension (EXT); Re-Release Pose (RRP)

When to Use: Counterpose for a series of forward bends

Anjaneyasana

Lunge, variation on Hanuman Pose (Magic 4 Pose #3)



W
EXT
LSR
RRP