



# kaadlaa!

## *Svaroopa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self*

Volume 1 No 5

May 30, 2013

### **Editorials** By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

#### **Master Yoga Foundation**

#### ***It's Physical***

"Yoga's going to help me with my body, right? I mean, I don't want any of that funny stuff. No airy-fairy funky-monkey woo-woo stuff. Yoga is physical, right?"

The answer is yes. Yoga is physical. You can come specifically for the physical changes that *Svaroopa®* yoga guarantees. Along with reducing your pain and increasing your flexibility, you'll be rewinding the age-clock and boosting your body's healing power. Yet more happens. Simultaneously you will also become more peaceful. You will smile more easily, breathe more fully, love more openly and discover there is more within you than you ever dreamed.

Here's how it works: as your spine decompresses, your mind decompresses. As

*continued on page 2*

#### **Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram**

#### ***It's Cosmic***

"Yoga's going to get me 'out there,' right? I mean, I want to go beyond... The world is full of war, of pain and pollution. I don't see any reason to be here. Yoga is cosmic, right?"

The answer is yes. Yoga is cosmic, especially meditation. You can come specifically to experience cosmic consciousness, but you'll find that it is "in there," not "out there." And "in there" means you're going to become more embodied as you go along. You'll reach a level of mastery where you embrace the physical process that we call life.

Here's how it works: *Svaroopa®* Vidya Meditation will propel you past your mind, expanding you beyond your idea of what is possible. It will immerse you in a personal

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# Tadaa!

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### Master Yoga Foundation

your lung space opens up, you feel less stressed, less hurried and even less worried. As your body's stress chemicals clear out of your bloodstream, replaced by yoga's bliss chemicals (endorphins), you discover you need less than you thought in order to be happy. You put less pressure on the people around you, even less pressure on yourself, yet you somehow accomplish more than ever before. The physical changes guarantee a change of mind and even a change of heart.

You may start *Svaroopaa*® yoga because your body needs it, but you continue yoga because you are getting something more. It turns out that the "more" is something you wanted all along, even when you couldn't figure out what you were looking for. You have been looking for happiness — everything you have done is so you'd get happy, but yoga says the source of happiness is within. You have been working hard to create a sense of self-worth, but yoga says you are Divine! Do more yoga.

### Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

experience of Divine Love and blast you beyond Love into the Bliss of Beingness-Itself. Along the way you will become more alive.

You may start *Svaroopaa*® Vidya Meditation because you want to escape from life, but you continue because you discover that this world is a Divine world. You will enjoy the taste of your food more. You'll revel in the beauty of nature. You'll laugh at a child and feel deep respect for your elders, all because you are now living in your body and owning your life. You'll discover there is more here than you ever dreamed. It's something you wanted all along, even when you couldn't admit it to yourself. You were born into this world for a reason; now you can discover what that is and complete the task you came to do. Do more yoga.

# Phenomenal Phone Courses

By Marlene Gast

Robin Blankenship is a recent Foundations graduate and a full-time piano teacher in the Atlanta area. Robin is also a fan of Master Yoga phone courses. She is always looking for ways to take courses without leaving home, since her profession requires her nearly continuous presence in Atlanta. “Just to be able to take a course in the *Svaroop*® sciences without traveling is a huge gift,” says Robin. “I am always looking for courses that I can take because I want more yoga. Phone courses fill in between the Pennsylvania travels that I am able to fit into my schedule.”

Robin is now in the midst of taking Vidyadevi’s phone course “Karma, Reincarnation & You,” which began in March, and took Swami Nirmalananda’s “Yogify Your Life” last year. In a word, “amazing” is how Robin describes “Yogify Your Life.” She says, “What I love is that Swamiji made the yogic teachings easy to understand, and they resonated within me. She would explain a teaching, and I would think ‘That’s so true.’ The experience of recognition brought me to tears and it changed me. I did all the homework and that changed me. Not only did I learn a lot, it was amazing to be connected to a living Guru on the phone! Her ability to bring teachings into life with everyday stories — finding the deepest truths in everyday life — moved me deeply. And the practices brought awareness into my daily life.”

Both courses, Robin says, have given her practices that have taken her deeper into Self in this

life. “When I am in the courses on the phone calls, I feel connected to the Source,” Robin says. “When I am listening on the phone call, I feel like I am in a state of deeper Consciousness in my own home. When I talk about my own experiences, I feel connected into my deeper Self.”

“In a phone course, each student has a chance to talk on the phone. I used to think I wouldn’t like to talk on the phone. I no longer like talking on the phone socially. But I have found Vichara on the phone very effective — and that led me directly to Vidyadevi’s Karma course, which consists of four calls over two months.



“I have always used the word karma thinking that I knew what it meant. Previously, I labeled situations and events as good karma or bad karma, according to how I identify things in my life as fortunate or unfortunate. Now I am understanding that any karma is karma. The course isn’t even over, so this is still filtering into my mind: Karma is the bondage that the mind creates. Vidyadevi told a story about a woman who was getting good karma. She was receiving a silk sari at every turn, and she didn’t even want these gifts. So the apparently good karma was really just another form of bondage.

“The course is leading me to a different understanding: I am becoming aware of how actions and reactions in life create karma — bondage.

We are doing practices and homework assignments to help us be more aware of how we react. I didn’t realize that I had anger — but in writing about reactions for my homework, I have been looking at anger. Then it begins to diffuse. The homework is so valuable, and on our calls we must be open and share. So I learn so much from the experiences of others in the course.

“I have also experienced a realization about learning when it comes to the *Svaroop*® sciences. In taking this course, I’m finding that there are two parts of my mind. On the call I feel that I understand in my Consciousness what it’s all about. Then, afterward, it’s hard for my everyday mind to grasp the concepts. My big Self understands, and my mind is trying to catch up. That in itself is a realization.”

In both phone courses Robin has found that getting to know the other students has been a significant benefit as well. She says, “We have gotten to know each other. We share our homework and share about our daily lives. I have enjoyed the connection to community without leaving my house.”

And, she concludes, “I find myself amazed about the information I’m being given — answers to the mysteries of life. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of this organization in offering these courses and making it easy for all of us to do more yoga!”

# The Wonder of Your Spine

By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

Your spine is your body’s central pillar of support, like the central pole in an old fashioned tent. When it is misaligned, compressed and twisted, your whole structure is off kilter: your feet will be different sizes, your smile will be lopsided, one eye bigger than the other, and everything in between (bottom-to-top) will suffer from similar imbalances. As these continue and worsen over the decades, you end up with physical problems, even organ problems, due to simple spinal misalignment.

Any chiropractor or osteopath will tell you this. Most of them love *Svaroop*® yoga, though they find that Svaroopis outgrow their need for their medical services. I choose the word “outgrow” because as your central pillar is decompressed, realigned and lifted, you do get taller. One woman told me she’d grown 3” over the previous 2 years, at the age of 45! Her doctor was surprised. I wasn’t.



If this was the only thing your spine did for you, it would still be important, but in addition to the structural support, your spinal bones shield and support your spinal cord. Every nerve in your body branches off from your spinal cord, thus whatever is going on in your spine affects the nerve supply to the other areas in your body, including skin, organs, glands, etc.

Most people think of the spinal cord as being an extension of their brain, like a long tail, but it’s actually the other way around. The spine is the first part of the human body to form in embryonic development, with the brain growing, like a mushroom cap, on one end of the spinal cord. In other words, it all begins in your spine — not in your brain.

And the key to your spine is your tailbone. It all-I-I-I begins at your tailbone.

# Spontaneous & Intentional Shaktipat — Chudala (Liz) Darling

By Ekamati (Diane) Tsurutani



Photo by John Nelson

**Chudala (Liz) Darling**

"I didn't know what Shaktipat was nor did I know that I had received it. I later realized it was spontaneous Shaktipat because my whole life changed after the retreat." Chudala shared this with us in November 2012. She had been a personal trainer when she attended her first Svaroopaa® yoga workshop with Swami Nirmalananda (then Rama Berch). Accustomed to creating intense physical workouts for her clients and herself, her yoga retreat made her unexpectedly move away from that physical paradigm and towards meditation.

She began taking a series of workshops and trainings, completed Master Yoga's Teacher Training and became a Certified Svaroopaa® Yoga Teacher. She and Christine (Kalavati) Hernandez now run a 501(c)3 non-profit, dedicated Svaroopaa® yoga studio in Aptos CA. Now she reports another big opening:

"I felt a shift take place at the Ashram's Grit and Grace retreat in October 2012. It compelled me to open myself consciously to receive this blessed gift of Shaktipat directly, with intention and consciousness. So, within weeks, I returned to PA for the next Shaktipat Retreat.

"Arriving at Temenos Retreat Center, it was easy being in a group of like-minded souls, all in a similar place of being open. We all shared the common thread to be open to Grace and allowing the changes inside to help with the changes on the outside; our hearts and souls were opening to the same Grace. Even though I live alone and like it that way, sharing a room and space with two other yogis I had never met before was easy. There was peace, quiet, and respect. Everything was easy – seva, sharing the bathroom, etc. — everything. If you are Shiva and see everyone else as Shiva, it is easy.

"I am the one who usually has all my ducks in a row, an A-type personality. But after the retreat, I left the center with neither of two GPS's working. I drove through the hilly Pennsylvania countryside, where roads are rarely straight and street signs seldom seen, directly back to the airport in south Philadelphia. I pulled into a never-before-visited gas station near the airport as if it were one of my favorite stops, filled up my tank, and then glided into the car rental agency with ease. I got exactly where I needed to go. I stopped stressing. The flow continued from unexpected early pre-boarding, on-time departure and arrival, all the way home.

"This shift continued at home. The inner turmoil of my usual Type A mind that 'wanted control and to not screw up' had settled down. It had gone away. Things were totally different from the way I had done them before. With Christmas approaching, finding the right present for the right person was easier than ever before. With a job and major source of income soon to disappear, I felt a calm acceptance and a realization that now there was time to focus more on the yoga center. Looking at it all I saw that the numbers of students had been building and the energy was naturally moving towards classes and meditation. There was a real possibility that running the studio would no longer be seva, but that I could finally get paid to teach. The timing was perfect.

"Everything had moved to get me to Downingtown for the Shaktipat Retreat. Ever since then, I don't agonize. The door is open. Even with the work transition, I'm being carried through stuff and not getting lost in emotions. My vasanas (mental tendencies) are shifting and I am now on a whole different track. I'm not doing things the way I would've before both Shaktipats (spontaneous and intentional). In so many instances and circumstances, I have found that I do not have to please others. Instead I honor myself and, in that way, I honor God. I don't have to work at it. Instead it is amazingly smooth, and comes easily. I don't have to be the doer. I'm not attached to the outcome. But instead I come from a place of good intentions.

"The waters are moving, but they are not the rapids. God has been working on me for many years. While I was not consciously aware of surrender, I have let go of how I thought life was supposed to be. How I thought to be healthy. Letting control go. Tightness — letting the tension go. Allowing, instead of forcing. This has been going on for years, between initially not knowing I had received spontaneous Shaktipat, and then returning this past November, aware and floating on Grace to receive intentional Shaktipat."

## Shaktipat Retreats with Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

The profound inward path of Self-Discovery (svaroopavidya) begins with you receiving shaktipat initiation, awakening your Kundalini energy. This makes you able to attain the highest purpose of human life — the knowing of your own Divine Self. Kundalini is the force underlying the power and ease of all the Svaroopaa® sciences designed and taught by Swami Nirmalananda.



**Experience the power of your inner force by receiving Shaktipat from Swamiji in 2013:**

**May 31 – June 2**

in West Chester PA

**June 21 – 23**

in North Andover MA

**Aug. 30 – Sept. 1**

in West Chester PA

**Post Conference Workshop in West Chester PA**

**October 6 – 8**

Questions? Need extra support?

Contact us at [enroll@svaroopavidya.org](mailto:enroll@svaroopavidya.org) or 610.644.7555.

# Assisting a Shaktipat Retreat

By Rukmini Abbruzzi



Photo Courtesy of Svaroop® Vidya Ashram

There's nothing like a Shaktipat Retreat. It's the sweetest celebration, and the greatest blessing. I've assisted Swami Nirmalananda in many programs over the years: asana courses and meditation programs, trainings and retreats. Yet the Shaktipat Retreat is unique, the culmination and concentration of the Grace that *Svaroop®* Yoga and *Svaroop®* Vidya arise from, the Grace that Swamiji embodies, exudes and bestows, the Grace that is the Divine dissolving of your limitations.

## Rukmini (Maria) Abbruzzi

As the Assistant Teacher, I have the sweet seva of supporting the participants throughout this weekend, a time devoted to their receiving Shaktipat Diksha, the initiation that awakens Kundalini, the Divine power of transformation. It's my honor and joy to serve both Swamiji and the yogis in this way. That support does not come only from me; before the weekend begins, the SVA staff and Program Assistant are in communication with the participants, ensuring that their housing and meal needs will be met.

On the day the program begins, staff and sevites spend hours behind the scenes preparing the meeting space at the retreat center, transforming it into sacred space. They set up poster-sized photos of the Gurus on easels at the front and back of the room, including the captivating photo of Swamiji's Guru Baba Muktananda that was taken while he was giving Shaktipat. They put into place Swamiji's bright orange seat, and on a small table beside it they place a small photo of her Guru. Across the room from the Guru's seat is a murti (a small statue) of Bhagawan Nityananda, Baba Muktananda's Guru. Candle flames and flower blossoms are offered to the Gurus, honoring the lineage, invoking their blessings. The support of the lineage and the Gurus surround you when you're sitting in the room, reflecting Consciousness wherever you look.

When the yogis arrive, they come in with a range and mix of emotions: excitement, trepidation, joy. Some have travelled from quite a distance and are tired and travel-worn. No matter how far they've had to travel or what arrangements they made with work and family to get here, they

have each been preparing in their own unique way to receive this profound and mysterious gift. And wherever they start, whether they're experienced meditators, or new to meditation, whether they're feeling calm or nervous, exhausted or energized, all the practices of the weekend prepare and support them, including arati (candle waving) and special chants that are only chanted at Shaktipat retreats.

At every retreat, Swami Nirmalananda describes what Shaktipat Diksha is in terms that are clear and accessible. She explains Kundalini, Guru and Grace. She makes it clear that she will be giving intentional Shaktipat three times, but that still, the Divine sparking that ignites Kundalini, the light of consciousness within you, can arise at any time. The best Shaktipat is spontaneous, and occurs in the moment you're ready to receive it. To be in the meditation hall with her is like being in a giant shakti-microwave. You can't not be irradiated.

Water images come to my mind when I try to describe what being in the shakti, what the flow of this shakti feels like: An ocean, a flood, a wave. Water images are apt, but they are dense and clumsy compared to the reality of the subtle, mysterious, yet palpable grace emanating from the Guru. The Grace emanating from the form and source of Grace.

Everyone's experience of Shaktipat is different, even during the course of the retreat. I've heard yogis describe deep stillness, profound peace, movement, heat, cold, joy, elation, sadness. They've seen colors, smelled fragrances, heard sounds and had visions. Some experienced nothing happening at all.

As an Assistant, Swamiji blesses me with intentional Shaktipat along with the participants. Each experience of Shaktipat I've had has been revelatory in its own unique way. Once you've received Shaktipat, you've received the whole of enlightenment in seed form. It's not like I've received a piece of enlightenment, a step towards it, with each initiation. For me, its my ability to perceive and understand the gift I've been given that expands.

By the end of the retreat, whether their experiences were subtly perceptible or blatant and obvious, what yogis mostly share with me is gratitude. Gratitude for the Divine Blessing and gift that has been so lovingly and freely bestowed, the awakening of their own divine Self. The gratitude of the participants reflects the boundless gratitude that I feel in my role of support to the participants and to my Guru, Swami Nirmalananda.

## Simple Vegetable Curry

3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
2 teaspoons brown mustard seeds  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 cup basmati rice, uncooked  
Salt & pepper  
1 tablespoon red curry paste  
(more if you prefer it spicy)  
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk  
1 sweet potato, peeled & cubed  
(you can substitute carrots or squash,  
if you like)  
1 small head cauliflower, cut in florets  
1 can chickpeas, drained & rinsed  
Fresh cilantro, for garnish

### Instructions:

Heat oil in a medium saucepan on medium/high. Add mustard seeds and half the onion. Cook, stirring onion until soft (about 3 mins). Add rice & stir to combine. Add 1½ cups water, season with salt & pepper, bring to a boil. Cover & reduce to a simmer; cook until water is absorbed & rice is tender. (You can also do this in a rice cooker.) Remove from heat & let stand for 5 mins. Fluff with a fork.

Meanwhile, heat 2 remaining teaspoons oil in a heavy pot. Add remaining onion and cook until soft. Add curry paste & stir until fragrant (about 1 min). Stir in coconut milk & 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Add vegetables & season with salt & pepper. Reduce heat, cover & simmer until veggies are tender.

Add chickpeas to the curry and increase the heat. Simmer rapidly, stirring often, until liquid reduces slightly (approx. 2 - 3 mins). Serve curry over rice. Top with cilantro.

योगा पुस्तक

By Jennifer Saville, Ashram Chef

## TRAINER PROFILE

# Janaki (Janet) Murray

By Marlene Gast



Photo courtesy of Master Yoga

**Janaki (Janet) Murray**

Based in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, Australia, Janaki has been teaching Foundations for three years; plus she teaches Foundations Review, a more challenging level for a Trainer.

In 2001, Margaret Howard-Smith pioneered *Svaroopa*® yoga in Australia. Margaret went on a yoga-search in America, found *Svaroopa*® yoga, and took Foundations and the month-long YTT course in La Jolla CA. Then, she invited Swami Nirmalananda to Australia to teach Foundations in Brisbane. That was

Janaki's first experience of *Svaroopa*® yoga. Janaki recalls, "It was a huge experience. It created such a lot of change so quickly. I was already teaching a different style of yoga and having troubles with my body. In Foundations I was doing just these simple poses in chairs and hitting tensions in my body. That was a revelation: 'What have I been doing to my body?!' My body felt awful and the *Svaroopa*® yoga poses hit those tensions. I could also tell the poses were working on those tensions."

Janaki says this revelation arose after the first evening of her first Foundations course. "The next morning," she remembers, "I was driving into the second day of the course feeling depressed and grumpy. I admonished myself: 'This is ridiculous, enjoy this course.' In hindsight I see that this was relapse. I had got a lot of opening quickly, and I was very emotional, on a rollercoaster. Rama (now Swami Nirmalananda) taught the whole course herself, so I was put right into the fire of yoga immediately. It was a thoroughly pivotal experience!"

In the three months afterward, even though she continued teaching her original style of yoga, Janaki practiced *Svaroopa*® yoga because it felt so good in her body. Her personal *Svaroopa*® yoga practice rid her of sciatica, and other aches and pains loosened up quickly as well. But, she says, teaching something else at the same time created difficulties. "I began to feel a split — the sense of standing with feet in two different boats. So I made the decision to travel to America to take YTT Levels 1 and 2, but those programs were a year away. So I got all the blankets, and switched all my classes to *Svaroopa*® yoga, teaching what I had learned in Foundations. Some of my students left, but many stayed. I said to myself, 'This is my journey; if people care to join me, that's great.'"

Janaki continues, "After I completed YTT Levels 1 and 2, I assisted MYX programs in Australia. The experience of assisting Swamiji and the Master Yoga Teacher Trainers encouraged me to become a Foundations Teacher myself. Working with them in these programs, I witnessed how wonderful they are in the classroom — how they can see things in students' bodies and work with them to find the pose angles for opening the spine. I thought, 'I want to be like that.' And it was so wonderful to assist students going through the transformational process that *Svaroopa*® yoga offers — you can just see firsthand how different they are at the end of a Yogimmersion.

"That's what I love about teaching Foundations now — how much people change. They get so much — it's a joy. What I know now is that students who take Foundations continue to progress in healing and transformation through *Svaroopa*® yoga practices even after the course. I

teach Foundations courses here in Australia as well as in America. Because I continue to see the Australian students afterwards, I have the joy of seeing their progress when they come for yoga therapy or Vichara. I see their progress, their commitment, their personal growth and their love for this yoga.

"Moreover, because of holding Foundations programs in Brisbane regularly since 2001, we have been able to create conscious community. That has given rise to the Australian *Svaroopa*® Yoga Association Inc. (ASYA), which supports us in bringing more *Svaroopa*® yoga training to Australia. ASYA is an incorporated association (equivalent to a non-profit organization in America)."

Based on her overall experience of being a Foundations Trainer, Janaki advises, "If you want to get really into the fire, become a Foundations Trainer! When I reflect on pivotal moments on my *Svaroopa*® yoga path, I must say that the training to become a Foundations teacher was like being on turbo-charge."

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Questions? Contact us at 866.588.9642 x. 14 or [satya@masteryoga.org](mailto:satya@masteryoga.org)

# The Fire of Yoga

By Swami Nirmalananda

Your support for Master Yoga is deeply heartwarming. It is also very "nutrifying." Heartwarming because I know you are donating to Master Yoga because you care. Nutrifying because your gifts provide vital nutrients for our organizational structure, making sure we'll be here to serve you tomorrow because you fed us today.

Thank you to the many yogis who have already donated to our annual birthday fundraiser. I've seen many stretch to offer a larger donation because it is being matched. It's inspiring to see how one yogi's generosity inspires others to give. I learned all about that by watching my Guru, and hope that my service to you similarly inspires you to the greatest you can offer.

Someone asked me recently if I ever get tired of orange. How could I get tired of orange? It's the color of fire! A swami wears the color of fire because the initiation is a fire ceremony. The fire holds me. The fire burns through me, giving both light and heat to the world. I founded Master Yoga

so it could carry the fire of yoga to all who choose to be warmed and illumined, including you. Yet Master Yoga depends on you for its very survival. Without you, there is no Master Yoga. Without you, there is no fuel for the fire.

I was recently reminded of the 80/20 rule. In fundraising circles, they explain that 20% of the people will donate, supporting the other 80%. I would like to think that it is different with yogis! We have already received donations from 20% of you - and the rest of you still have an opportunity to give. Consider, what could Master Yoga do if 100% of you were supporting it? Where would Svaroopa® yoga go? Ultimately, you're in charge.

We've only got a few days left in our annual campaign. We're close to reaching our \$20,000 goal, especially with every donation up to \$10,000 being doubled by the Matching Gift offer. With your help, we can meet and even surpass our goal! With your gift, we can prove the 80/20 rule wrong.

Your [One-Time Gift](#) or [Monthly Donation](#) in any amount is deeply appreciated. Thank you for fueling the fire of yoga at Master Yoga.



Photo by Brendan Nogue

A yoga weekend, three days of core opening through Svaroopa® yoga's amazing techniques and teachings. Align your body, heart and mind with Grace. Deepen your yoga experience, deepen your teaching, deepen your yoga relationships and deepen your Self-Knowingness. Discover what Grace really is and how it empowers your yoga practice and your life.

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- ▼ **Ashram Track**
- ▼ **Community Track**
- ▼ **Teacher Track**
- ▼ **Foundations Track**
- ▼ **Seva Team**
- ▼ **Pre-conference & Post-conference Programs**

Registration: \$175 - 720 based on track.  
Your vegetarian meals are included.

**Enroll now. First 101 yogis to register receive \$101 discount!**

To register or learn more, visit [www.svaroopaconference.org](http://www.svaroopaconference.org)

*Do the practices, catch the Grace!*

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## Svaroopa® Sciences Conference 2013

**October 4 - 6  
Philadelphia PA**

Alignment  
with *Grace*

**FIRST  
101  
REGISTRANTS  
Get \$101  
OFF!**

# A Celebration to Remember

By Marlene Gast

From Friday May 17<sup>th</sup> through Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup>, Earth herself was a giant birthday cake glowing with flickering birthday candles as we Svaroopis worldwide celebrated with parties for Master Yoga's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. For those three days our collective Fire of Yoga brought extra illumination to the world that Svaroopas® yoga teachers serve. Master Yoga sent out 30 party packets with candles for local birthday cakes, birthday balloons and Swami Nirmalananda's birthday message. Many communities held parties and supplied their own decorations.

Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center celebrated by offering a free class along with cake, candles and balloons. Plum Tree in Roswell GA celebrated following their regular Sunday afternoon class as did River Time Yoga in Boise ID. And Australia, from the point of view of North America, began partying on Thursday night!! This is just a small sampling of the party locations.

Have you noticed a trend to enjoying a whole birthday month— not just a single day? We Svaroopis can do the same! On YouTube you can still watch [videos](#) of Master Yoga's 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration on the beach in La Jolla, complete with the audio of live drumming and Indian music. To continue our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party and celebrate with each and all virtually, take a look at our [Birthday webpage](#). Celebrating Svaroopis have sent in a host of wonderful photos. Check out all of the [birthday blogs](#) — and warm in the Fire of Yoga that we have brought to life all over again.

If you have not sent in your photos yet, you have another day or two. Just send them to [birthday@masteryoga.com](mailto:birthday@masteryoga.com). Please include your name and phone number, the location of the party, and identify guests left to right. We who love and support Master Yoga have much to celebrate! What a great way to do more yoga!!



# Easy Enrollment, Administrative Efficiencies

By Marlene Gast

Master Yoga now has a brand-new automated enrollment system, similar to and yet different from Svaroopas® Vidya Ashram's system. It is provided by ProClass and will be fully implemented by the end of May. You will find the same 24/7 availability, ease of use, and helpful "human" backup to supply you with answers to usage or course questions as well as help with system navigation and any other operational mysteries. Sheynapurna (Sandy) Peace does seva as one of the Ashram's Enrollment Coordinators and says she expects that Svaroopis will feel, as she does, that the biggest benefit is the easy "anytime" access, day or night. She says, "This 24/7 access takes a lot of pressure off enrolling in the course you want."

If a yogi does not feel comfortable using a computer or has other questions, Caroline Kennedy, Master Yoga's Enrollment Advisor, will take care of the process for you. At the Ashram, Sheynapurna heads a team of sevites who do this, saying, "It's my favorite seva. It's that I really feel like I can help people when they are confused and concerned and they need something straightened out. It makes me happy to be the person to help find the answers. I know where to go to get the answers. This is personal." Enrollment Team member Sarvataa Christie also likes being a part of providing "a complete safety net." She says, "Don't be afraid. If something happens, we're there to help you immediately. We care about the community, and we've been through it ourselves. Nothing is undoable. Nothing is permanent."

Master Yoga students can expect the same level of assistance. And they can expect the same kind of experience overall as users of the Ashram Enrollment System.

Jyoti (Rebecca) Yacobi has been signing up for Ashram courses since it came into being. She remembers using email in those early days. Now she finds the Ashram enrollment system very easy. She appreciates the immediate help that is available. "You still have that personal touch from the team monitors," says Jyoti, "And I love that it is so straightforward to sign up for a course. It works!"

Pat Morrison, another "frequent flyer" on the Ashram's enrollment system, echoes Jyoti's experience. "From the mechanics point of view, the enrollment system is convenient. You can have your credit card on file, so you don't have to go find it when you want to sign up for a course. If you encounter any glitches, you can call or email an Enrollment Advisor for very quick assistance. And once you have signed up, you get immediate email confirmation. Also, you can go online and see what you're signed up for as well as the history of courses/programs you've already taken. It's great not to have to bother a staff person with such a request. The Ashram's system gives me a wonderful sense of security."

With Master Yoga's new enrollment system, you can expect the very same fully supportive experience. A tech support team is being set up now, but you can always just phone Master Yoga Programs Advisor Caroline Kennedy!

As to streamlining administration - so important for Master Yoga's Reawakening - the new system will make it easy to monitor enrollment in courses, and the resulting financial profile for the organization, at glance. For recording payments one step will take the place of three steps. What a great gift for the 21st Birthday of Master Yoga.

## Clair Oaks Music and Other Inspirations

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# Swamiji's Shaktipat Anniversary

By Priya Kenney

## What is a Birthday?

Swamiji's birthday is a cause for celebration. We are so grateful she is among us! As great as birthdays are, yoga gives us another way to look at them. Verse 10 of the Guru Gita says:

Birth is into not knowingness, spellbound by Maya's worldly dance.

"When you take human birth," says Swamiji, "you're being birthed into unconsciousness, you're being birthed into limitation. Consciousness is binding itself, taking on the not-knowingness or the ignorance of your own Divinity."

Identifying with outer things starts immediately. Without an internal point of reference, we are constantly looking outward, scanning for things that will finally solve the mystery of who we are. Swamiji puts it this way, "Everything that comes across your field of vision, you go, 'Oh, is that me? Is that who I am? Is that what I'm supposed to be doing? Is that what life is all about?'"

Remembering our Divinity is the greatest challenge we face. No wonder we have to practice it so much. "Yoga speaks extensively about reincarnation and that it takes many lifetimes to actualize what is present in the mysterious hidden realms, the secret inner spaces of every human being," says Swamiji.

It takes so many lifetimes because we're looking outward and in all the wrong places. "It's the most daunting task of all to reverse this natural flow of attention," says Swamiji. "To overcome that incredibly powerful tendency and to harness those energies for a different purpose is really, in a sense, to go nuclear. Those energies moving in an external direction are merely exponential but those energies turned inward are nuclear."

## Birth into Consciousness

Shaktipat kindles the Divine fire that turns our focus inward. Now you are on the road to knowing and being your own Self — as described in Swamiji's English translation of the introductory mantras of the Guru Gita. "When you receive Shaktipat, you're given that internal point of reference again," says Swamiji. It was always there, but you didn't have access to it. It is a birth into Consciousness; it's a birth into Self-knowingness."

For Swamiji, the most important thing about

her Shaktipat anniversary, celebrated on Memorial Day, is the opportunity to celebrate the immense gift she was given by her Guru. She lives in gratitude for this gift all the time, but the anniversary provides a special time to marvel at the incredible generosity of her Guru. "He didn't hold back," says Swamiji. "He was like the sun, always and ever giving. While that was true on a global scale, for me it's true on a very personal scale. It's a day where I get to celebrate that intensely personal experience that I had and I continue to have of Muktananda. It's a day where I get to be a disciple. It gives me an occasion to conjure up that external referent, so I can play and dance in that relationship with Him."

The Guru is all about relationship. There are systems where people focus on attaining non-relational Consciousness. You might have teachers, but you don't have a Guru. My experience of having a Guru is that it is an intimate and deeply personal relationship. Her Grace, guidance and teachings provide the most nourishment I have ever experienced.

The Guru will set you free, but first, "the Guru is going to push every relationship button you've got so that you master relationship but for a different purpose," says Swamiji. There are two special days each year that allow us to revel in how relationship can propel us into Consciousness — our Shaktipat anniversary and Guru Purnima, the full moon of the Guru.

## When is your Shaktipat Anniversary?

Many Svaroopi's received organic Shaktipat while doing *Svaroopaa*® yoga asana, long before there was any chance of getting intentional Shaktipat. For me, it happened during Foundations on Spring Break of 2008. One of

the teachers was giving me an adjustment and suddenly, I was floating in a most expansive, beatific state. I was totally blown away and begged her, "I'll give you anything to stay right there." I never wanted to leave that state. It was beyond bliss.

You may have a memory of an experience at a retreat, in class or during your own practice when something extraordinary happened, and



Photo by Iqbal Memon's photo shop

you now understand that was the moment when your own fire of knowingness was ignited within. Life since that time has been different. Your reason for Being started to become clear in that moment.

If you're not sure, think about when you started *Svaroopaa*® yoga. When did you know you were going to stick with it? You may have started classes because of physical pain or just "stumbled" on *Svaroopaa*® yoga, and at some point you knew this was it. If you don't have a specific date to pin it to, you can pick one that seems right — maybe a Thursday because that is Guru Day and now you have a way to honor your experience every year.

Swamiji says, "Every year on my Shaktipat anniversary, I gain new insights into what this day really means to me and what was given to me. This is another year of practice that I've been developing what I was given when I received Shaktipat. Marking this day is a great opportunity to look at the small s self and capital S Self, to reflect on how they line up. What have we done with what we have received?"

# After She's Gone...

By Amala Cataffi-Heinlein

This is a harsh title for an article; it strikes terror into many of us to think "what will happen when Swamiji is gone?" Of course, she will never actually be gone, but there will come a time when she will leave her body. The Ashram Board wants to share our plans for this eventuality and also Swamiji's personal thoughts and plans.

This is a very uncomfortable subject, which is why we are delving into it (such a yogic practice!). We have had very frank and open discussions with Swamiji on her vision for the Ashram, in the present, the future and beyond. You will all be pleased to know that she is planning to remain embodied to actively teach, support and foster our spiritual development for the foreseeable future, though how she does it will change over time. While she envisions herself teaching into her 80's, she, along with the Board, is also focusing on the sustainability of her teachings. We are creating a succession plan.

Later this year, Swami Nirmalananda will unveil a program for those who wish to take vows. It does not require living at or near the Ashram and it will allow for those of us who are householders to participate. Her vision is clear: create a vowed order of yogis who choose to live by certain standards and maintain a certain level of practice. This will allow her to take the vowed community deeper, through teachings and practices that require this level of personal commitment.

We also recognize that there will be yogis who will want to live nearby. Some yogis may want to eventually become swamis in their own right. I

can already see some who look like they are headed in that direction. It is so beautiful!

There is also the question of Ashram assets. We have the house in Downingtown, plus we will likely purchase an additional building to house our public programs and provide guest and resident housing. Our plan is to avoid building a large accumulation of material things. Instead, we will invest in the teachers that Swamiji is preparing for the next generation. This is about the sustainability of the teachings, not of the buildings. Eventually, there will be a published list of authorized teachers, which Swamiji will hand-select from the vowed community. These yogis will be authorized to succeed Swamiji and carry on the teachings.

When Swamiji has left her body, the Ashram's material assets will be liquidated and the money will be donated to those authorized individuals who have set up their own non-profit organizations in order to carry the teachings forth. This is just as Swamiji herself has done, and Muktananda before her — it is perfection! This is a labor of HER love for us, and for her Guru, as it will be a labor of love and devotion for those who follow.

When the vowed order is ready to begin, you will be invited to consider your participation in whatever level works for you. I recommend that you dive deep and let it take you where it will. Whatever that is, it will be perfect! Om Namah Shivaya

## Japa Gives You Everything

Excerpts from Swami Nirmalananda's Satsang Talk, November 27, 2012

Go ahead and use your mind the way you always do. Continue to prioritize those thoughts over the mantra — the one thing that will give you everything. You'll get what you always get.

*Mantra may have to overcome a lot to get you all the way back "in there." How far away did you get from your Self before you started repeating mantra to get back?*

Mantra gives you meditation. It always works. What else in your life always works? You might need to repeat mantra 200 or 2,000 times today, if you've gotten a long way away from your Self, but it always works.

*I don't want to call it Unity-Consciousness because the term is so misunderstood. Unity-Beingness, that's what "yoga" means. How do you get there? By japa.*

How can the mantra be so reliable? The mantra, with every repetition, reaches inward. The mantra works because it works with what is already there inside you. It always works because your own Divinity is already there, inside.

*Japa sustains that meditative state in the midst of your life. It's no longer just happening in your meditation. It pours into and fills your whole day, your whole night, your whole next day, your whole next day... When do you want that to stop?*

What is more important to you? So important that your mind says, "Oh, let's stop doing japa. We want to go over there and do that other thing instead." So that you can lose the Self again.

*Do more japa.*

## Meditation Starter Kit

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# New Ashram Board Members

By Rudrani (Rosemary) Nogue

## Welcome to our two new Board Members!

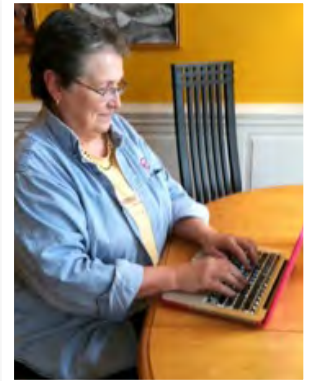
**Kristine Freeman CSYT, RYT 500** hails from the Boston area and balances family life with three teenagers and a husband, while teaching yoga classes and taking Ashram courses. She first discovered Svaroop® yoga in 2002 when her Physical Therapist insisted she attend classes. From the first class she knew she would return. She thought, "I don't know what this is but my body likes it." Three years later she took Foundations, then YTT Level One, but for personal interest with no intention of teaching. And, of course, she ended up teaching! Kristine discovered she is deeply drawn to yoga philosophy and meditation, so she has taken all of the SVA year-long courses and many Master Yoga sutra courses. She participated in the first trip to India offered by Swami Nirmalananda (then Rama Berch) in 2009, shortly before Swamiji took her vows. Kristine is open to knowing at increasingly deep levels, "What is this (inner feeling) and where does it come from?"



**Kristine Freeman**

When I first met Kristine, I knew from our first "hello" that Kristine is a friendly, open, and easy-to-know yogi. I asked her what motivated her to serve on the Board, and she immediately said "gratitude." Then, she added that she has "gotten so much from the practices and the Ashram offerings." Now she would like to support the SVA Board with her time and skills, to express this gratitude for all she has received and continues to receive through the Grace of the Guru. Kristine states, "I am interested in doing whatever is needed on the Board." In a previous career (BY), she worked in advertising and marketing at ad agencies. She served clients by creating effective marketing plans and implementing advertising and marketing activities. Through her past career as well as her career as a parent and yoga teacher, she brings many skills to our Board including the ability to look at the big picture, working easily with people, organizing and an eye for detail.

**Kanchan (Connie) Mohn** brings a wealth of experiences on all levels. Attending satsangs and meditation classes at DYMC in her hometown of Downingtown PA led her to Swamiji and the Ashram. It will be a great support to have a Board Member living in the same town!



**Kanchan (Connie) Mohn**

Kanchan calls herself "a lifetime seeker of God" and believes her decades long search ended when she met Swamiji, who she calls "the Living Truth." Kanchan had a very brief early contact with Baba that stayed with her and resurfaced numerous times over the years, most recently, in the form of Swamiji, "a form I cannot ignore or deny." She wonders how this amazing connection could possibly have happened to her. And answers her own question with, "Such is Grace."

With a M.Ed. in Social Restoration, she has a lifetime of service to the local disability community. Her past and present career path include director or assistant executive director roles in organizations that serve this population. She is currently Director of Advocacy for the Arc of Chester County and educates and empowers families by helping them gain the necessary skills to become their special needs child's best advocate. Kanchan also has a background in many integrative therapies including Energy Kinesiology, Massage and Deep Muscle Therapy. She had a small practice for a number of years and has served as president on a national board.

Kanchan asks, "How could I not serve on the SVA board, when asked? It is such a joy to serve Self, to serve Love." Her consuming desire is to surrender completely to Love. "It's all I have ever really wanted. And Heartfelt service is surrender, is Love, and the self is consumed by Love." Kanchan welcomes the opportunity to serve SVA — in any capacity.

**Welcome Kristine and Kanchan ! We are delighted to have you as part of our Board Team.**

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Full page (7.625 x 9.825 in.)	\$310	\$300	\$290	\$100

# Svaroopaa® Calendar

Click on program titles for information about **Master Yoga** Programs and **Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram** Programs.

DYMC refers to **Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center**.

May 2013		
30	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
30	<b>New! Yoga Business 101</b> (Phone Course begins)	Swamiji & MY Marketing Consultants
31	<b>EYTS Pose Clinic</b>	Karobi in Exton PA
31 – June 2	<b>Shaktipat Retreat</b>	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
June 2013		
1	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
1	<b>Swamiji's Shaktipat Satsang 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)</b>	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
2	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
2	<b>New! Melting Pain</b> Half Day Workshop	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
3 – 9	<b>New Dates! ATT 262: Yoga Therapy-Treating Pain</b>	Vidyadevi & Karobi in Exton PA
4	<b>New! ATT 262: DTS program</b> (phone calls begin June 23)	Vidyadevi & Karobi
4	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
6	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
9	<b>Swami Sunday</b> 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
11	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
12 – 17	<b>Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga</b>	Janaki in Brisbane Australia
13	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
14	<b>Bondage &amp; Freedom</b> Article #4	Swamiji
16 – 21	<b>Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga</b>	Vidyadevi & Polly at Kripalu in Stockbridge MA
16	<b>Swami Sunday</b> 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
17	<b>Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga</b>	Tish & Margo in Antioch IL
18	<b>New Dates! EYTS Foundations Review</b>	Karobi in Exton PA
18	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
20	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
21	<b>New Dates! EYTS Deceptive Flexibility</b>	Karobi in Exton PA
21 – 23	<b>Shaktipat Retreat</b>	Swamiji in Boston MA
25	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
26-Jul 2	<b>ATT 523: Advanced Bliss</b>	Vidyadevi & Karobi & Swamiji in Exton PA
27	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
27	<b>New! ATT 523: DTS program</b> (phone calls begin Jul 16)	Vidyadevi & Karobi
28	<b>Bondage &amp; Freedom</b> Audio #4	Swamiji
29	<b>Phone Q&amp;A Satsang</b> 10:30 am – noon (EDT)	Swamiji
30	<b>Swami Sunday</b> 8:30 am – 12:15 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
July 2013		
2	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
10 – 12	<b>New Dates! EYTS Foundations Review</b>	Janaki n Brisbane, Australia
11 – 15	<b>Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga</b>	Bhakta & Kamala in Westford MA
12 – 21	<b>New Dates! Level 1</b>	Karobi & Vidyadevi in Brisbane, Australia
14	<b>Swami Sunday</b> 8:30 am – 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
16	<b>Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
18	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
21	<b>Guru Purnima Satsang</b> 7:30 – 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
19	<b>Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga</b>	Bhakta & Kamala in Groton CT
25	<b>Shree Guru Gita</b> 6:30 – 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
26	<b>New! Wringing Out the Tension, Half Day Workshop</b>	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
27 – Aug 2	<b>ATT 221: Twists</b>	Vidyadevi in Exton PA

# Vajrasana

## Digestion Pose, Firm Pose, Thunderbolt Pose

**Sanskrit:** *vajra* = thunderbolt, lightning bolt, radiant, scintillating strength

**Concerns & Dangers:** This pose can cause knee injury if you force it! If you have knee pain, do the *Substitute Pose*: Sukhasana.

### INSTRUCTIONS

**To Do Before:** No specific poses are required before doing Vajrasana, but you will get the most benefit if you have done poses for your tailbone, sacrum, the vertebrae through your waist area & rib cage. If you are doing this immediately after eating, do not do other poses before Vajrasana.

**Preparation:** Begin on your hands & knees. Bring your knees & big toes together.

**Moving In: Classical Pose (Optional):** Keep your knees & big toes touching as you spread your heels wide to make a cradle. Sit back into this cradle. Or, keep your toes together & pointing back while you sit back on your heels. Lean your full body weight through your sitbones into your feet. If you are uncomfortable, use props (see next item).

**With Props:** For props, you may need one blanket, or you may need 3 blankets or more. See \**Props* — *Blanket Roll & Ankle Cliff*.

**Staying in the Pose:** Allow your whole spine to soften & lengthen upward. If at any time your knees begin to hurt, put your hands on the floor & come up to your hands & knees to move out of the pose. [*Minimum* – 90 seconds; *Maximum* – 20 minutes]

**Moving Out:** Come up to your hands & knees to move out of the pose.

**To Do After:** Frequently followed by Lunge.

### PROPS

**Blanket Roll:** While you are on your hands & knees, place a blanket roll between your feet with the smooth end of the blanket roll between your ankles & the fringed end extended toward the wall behind you. Don't place the roll too far forward, along your calves or between your knees. Move your knees together & then sit on your rolled blanket. Tuck your toes inward underneath the edge of the blanket to get a similar angle to the classical pose, or your toes can point straight back.

**Ankle Cliff:** This provides a cliff edge for your feet to lean off, to take the pressure off your feet, ankles, knees & legs. Use one of these versions — "*Lexus*": Use 3 blankets: 1 folded blanket plus 2 blanket rolls.

Stack your 2 blanket rolls (one on top of the other), with the fringed ends toward the wall behind you. Place your folded blanket in front of your bottom roll with the rounded edge of your folded blanket touching the front of your bottom roll. Slide your top roll forward about a footprint.



# Vajrasana

## Digestion Pose, Firm Pose, Thunderbolt Pose

Climb onto your folded blanket, placing one foot on each side of your blanket rolls. Make sure your knees & shinbones are on your folded blanket with your ankles right at the edge of your folded blanket, so your feet are leaning off the blanket, with the lower part of your shinbones on your blanket.

Keep your hands on the floor while you move your knees & feet until you get your shinbones & ankles in place. Pause.

Bring your knees together with your hands still on the floor & your hips in the air. Tuck your feet in close to your blanket rolls. Finally, sit back on your top blanket roll.

**"Beemer":** Add one more blanket to each stack, using 5 blankets; 2 folded blankets plus 3 blanket rolls.

Stack your 3 blanket rolls (the top one may be a zed), with the fringed ends toward the wall behind you. Stack your 2 folded blankets in front of your bottom roll with the rounded edge of your folded blankets touching the front of your bottom rolls.

Slide your top 2 blanket rolls forward, about a footprint, before you sit down, to make it a more stable stack.

Climb onto your stack of folded blankets, placing one foot on each side of your blanket rolls. Make sure your knees & shinbones are on your folded blankets, with your ankles right at the edge, so your feet are leaning off the blanket & your ankles are comfortably bent, with the lower part of your shinbones on your blanket.

Keep your hands on the floor while you move your knees & feet until you get your shinbones & ankles in place. Pause.

Bring your knees together with your hands still on the floor & your hips in the air. Tuck your feet in close to your blanket rolls. Finally, sit back on your top blanket roll.

### POSE ANGLES

**Knees:** Your knees must be together while you are in the pose (your kneecaps are not actually touching, but your inner thighs are). If your knees (& inner thighs) are sliding apart, even a little bit, come forward onto your hands & knees, then move your knees together, & sit down again.

**Feet:** Tuck your toes under your seat or under your props, or they may point directly back. It is dangerous for your knees if your toes & feet point outward.

**Reliable Spinal Release:** None

**Possible Spinal Release:** This is the one seated pose in which your spine is most easily both upright & relaxed.

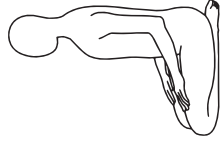
**Other Benefits:** Improves your digestion. For digestive problems, sit in Vajrasana for 20 minutes after every meal until your digestion improves. If your digestion is good, sit in Vajrasana for 20 minutes daily after your main meal. Quiets your mind; establishes an inner quality of firmness with clarity & resolve.

**Movement Type:** Forward Bend (FB)

**When to Use:** As a meditation pose. Traditionally used for receiving teachings at the feet of the Guru. This is the only pose you can do after eating.

# Vajrasana

## Digestion Pose, Firm Pose, Thunderbolt Pose



FB